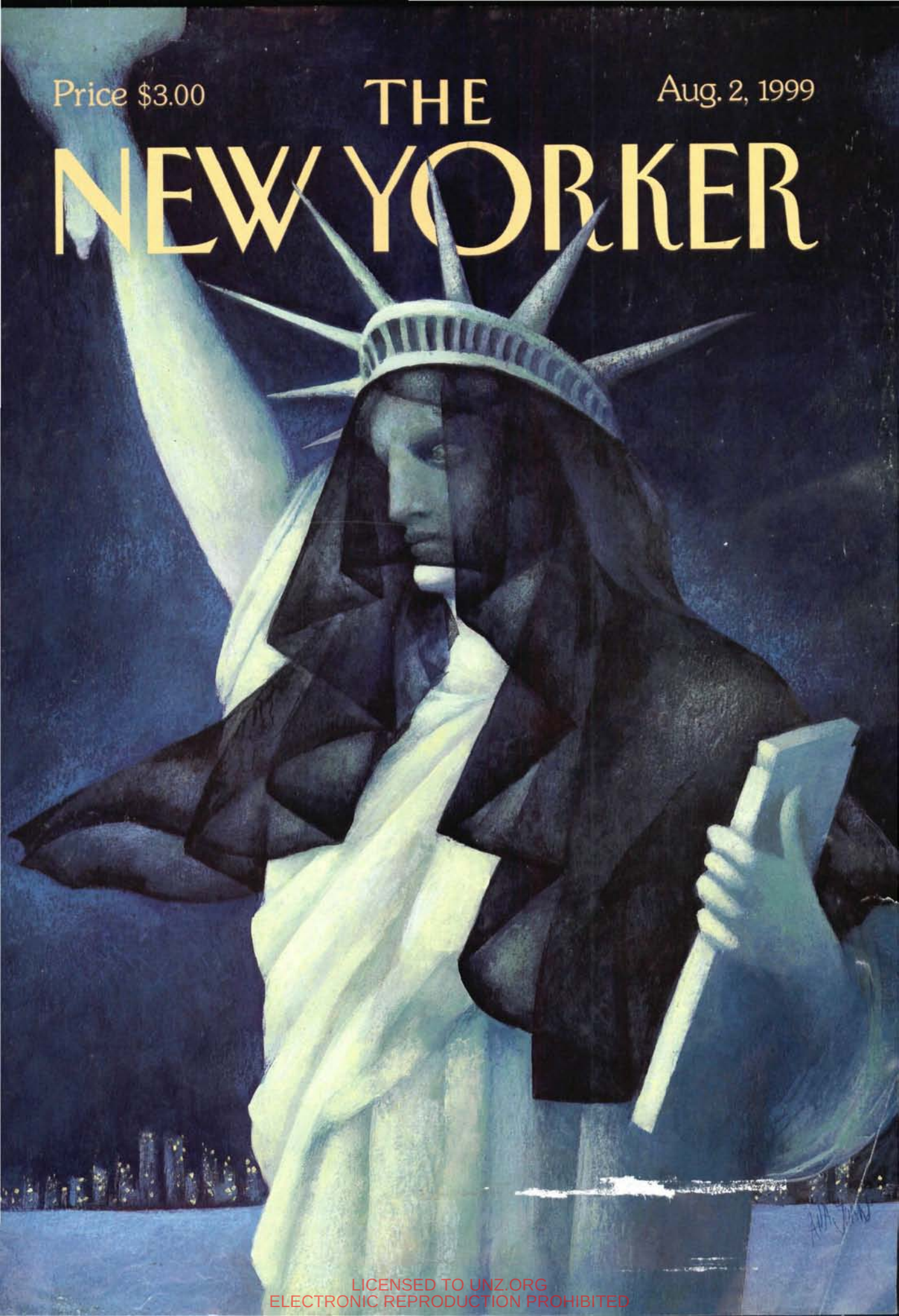
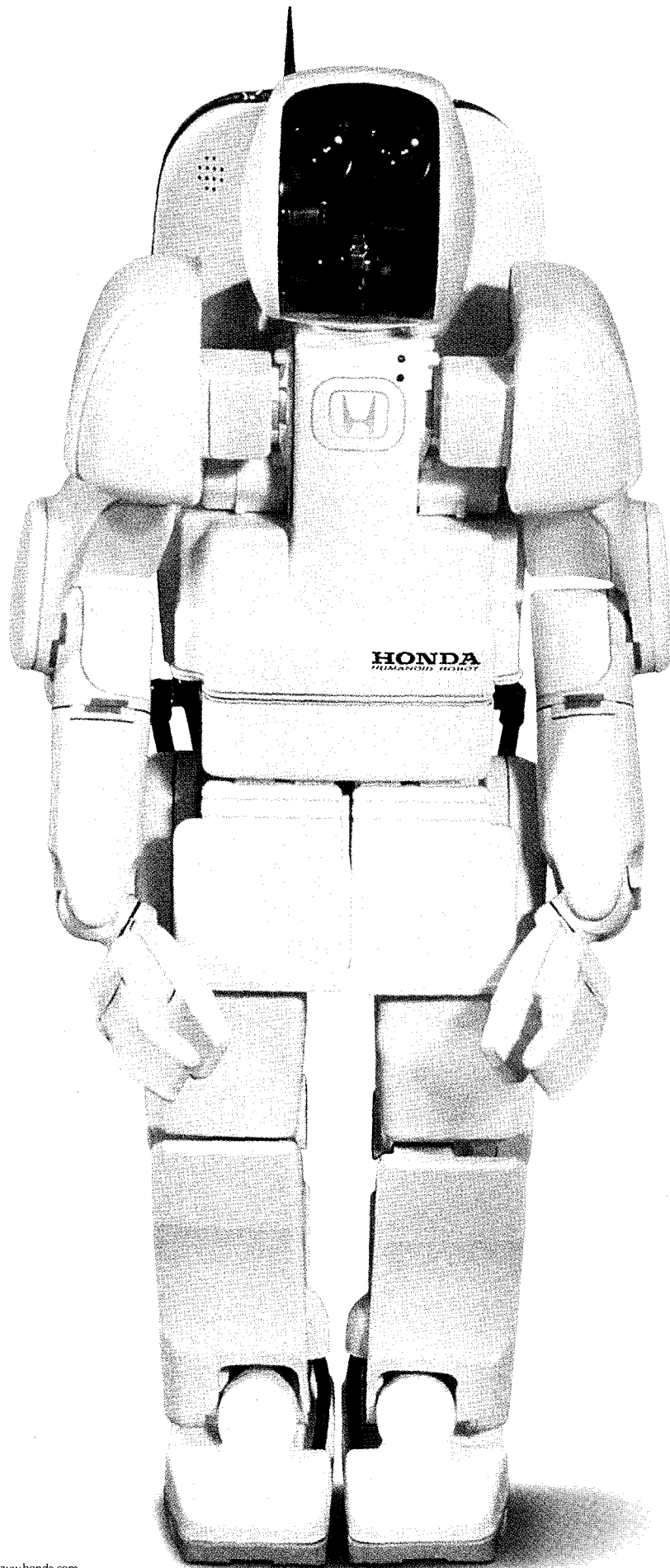


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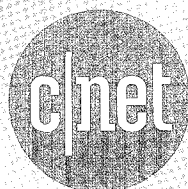
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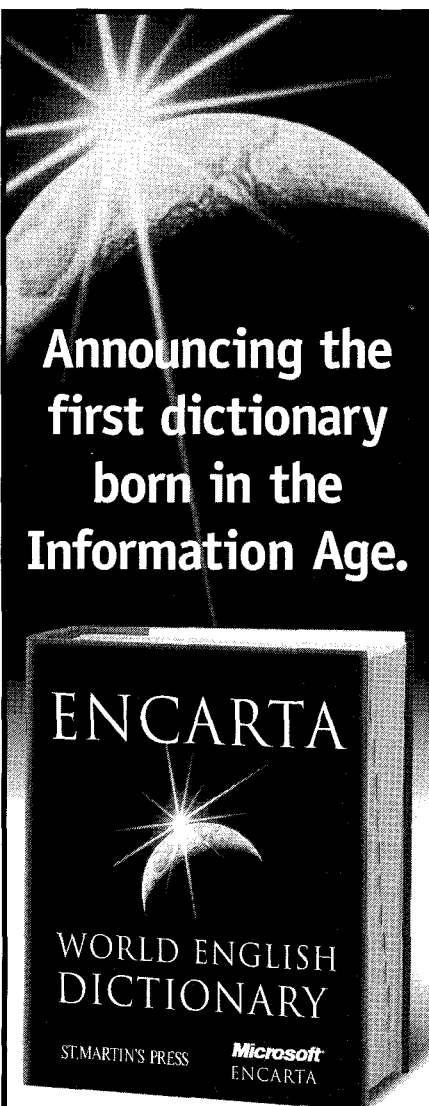


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"I take it we got the account."

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THE MAIL



MOTHER NATURE

Richard Preston highlights the threat presented by illegal stores of the smallpox virus ("The Demon in the Freezer," July 12th), and it's a threat that should not be taken lightly, but natural evolution (as opposed to biological weaponry) is the more likely source of the next widespread epidemic. Viruses and other microorganisms seem to be evolving at a rate that supersedes the rate at which scientists can research and produce new cures. The introduction of the AIDS virus into the human population, for instance, has been catastrophic; this virus would be even more deadly if it were airborne (as it easily could have been). The Nobel Prize winner Dr. Joshua Lederberg said it best: "We live in evolutionary competition with microbes. There is no guarantee that we will win."

JESSICA COHEN
Chapel Hill, N.C.

COVERING YOUR BETS

In "Time Bomb" (July 5th), John Cassidy quotes a New York Federal Reserve Bank official as saying that the collapse of Long-Term Capital would have posed "unacceptable risks to the American economy." As Cassidy points out, if the assets of a single investment firm can become this pivotal to our nation's economic well-being it's time to rethink our financial regulations. We allow firms like Long-Term Capital to impose substantial risks on the public, and, as long as their bets pay off, we blithely forgive the dangers they create in the process. In other areas of life, we are more careful: the drunk driver is stopped and punished, even if he hasn't yet crashed. One remedy for this kind of financial "reckless endangerment" is to require firms to insure themselves against insolvency. This way, firms could fund their own bailouts, instead of needing handouts from the rest of us.

BEN EGGLESTON
Pittsburgh, Pa.

WEIRD SCIENCE

When I had just finished reading Timothy Ferris's article on the physicist Richard Gott ("How to Predict Everything," July 12th), a delivery van arrived with my new couch. Excited by Gott's prediction method, I decided to estimate the couch's life span. Sitting down with a calculator one second after the couch arrived, I was able to forecast that the couch would last at least one thirty-ninth of an additional second and not more than forty seconds altogether. Yikes! The couch had looked sturdy enough in the showroom. Perhaps I had not spent enough time in graduate school learning how to solve a problem like this one correctly. Since I attended graduate school for six years, most people must spend between six years plus one month and two hundred and thirty-four years in graduate school. (I must let Mom and Dad know about that one.) On the other hand, since I am thirty-six years old, I will live for anywhere from a little less than a year to one thousand four hundred and four years, so there is always time to go back to school. But I can see that I'm going to wear out a lot of couches.

ANDREW KYDD
Riverside, Calif.

What Dr. Gott calls the Copernican principle is really just an acknowledgment that as humans we are ignorant of the order of things: we dwell in randomness. Guessing the duration of a Broadway play on the basis of the assumption that "your location is not special" is probably a good enough technique for such a frivolous purpose, but when the answer to a question is important (for instance, How long will the human species last?) we must rise above randomness. We do this by seeking real knowledge, and by returning to our Ptolemaic roots and striving to be, well, special.

MICHAEL GENEST
Sacramento, Calif.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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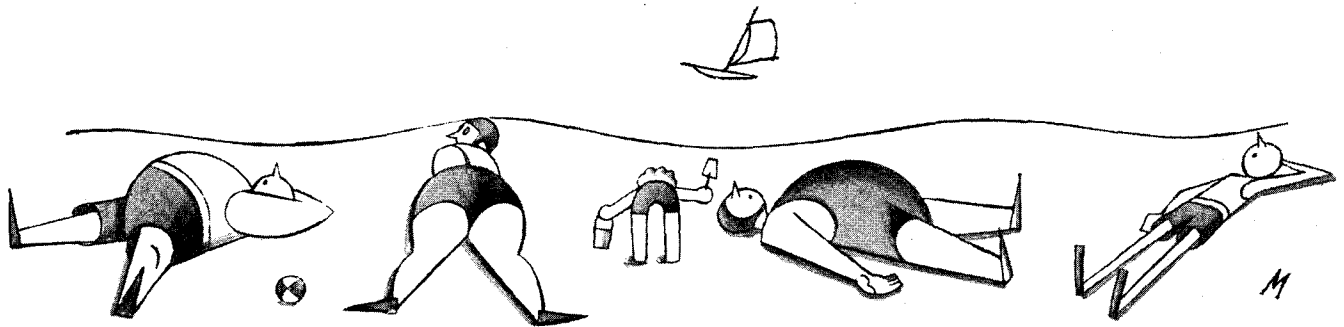
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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

EUGENE O'NEILL FESTIVAL—The second season in a five-year undertaking of O'Neill's oeuvre by Playwrights Theatre. Aug. 3 at 7:30: "Bound East for Cardiff," "Abortion," and "The Movie Man." Continues through Aug. 8. This year's festival runs through Sept. 12. (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 Macdougall St. For information about tickets, call 998-5801.)

A GOOD SWIFT KICK—A comic revue of twenty-odd songs by John Forster, on such topics as Thomas Jefferson's DNA and cultural imperialism. Preview on July 28. Opens July 29 at 8. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

JAR THE FLOOR—Irma P. Hall, Linda Powell, Regina Taylor, Lynne Thigpen, and Welker White portray five members (representing four generations) of a black family, who gather for the ninetieth birthday of the great-grandmother, in a drama by Cheryl L. West. Marion McClinton is the director. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AFTER THE FAIR—The York Theatre Company presents a musical based on the Thomas Hardy story "On the Western Circuit," with book and lyrics by Stephen Cole and music by Matthew Ward. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 15.)

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

AUTOMATIC EARTH—From 3-Legged Dog, a multimedia work written by Kevin Cunningham, in which a man with a brain injury explores the American landscape as a hurricane heads his way. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 645-0374. Closes Aug. 1.)

BENTEN KOZO—Traditional Kabuki meets Jackie Chan in a terrific evening concocted by director Jim Simpson and his Bat Theatre Company. The company's hip updating of the nineteenth-century script, along with Moe Schell's clever costumes, creates an ironic, funny, energetic production that (like many of the company's offerings in the past year) is

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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well worth a trek to Tribeca. The show runs in repertory with Erin Courtney's dark comedy, "Mother's Couch," which is performed Fridays and Saturdays at 11 P.M. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051. Closes Aug. 8.)

THE BRAVE—The Scottish playwright Sharman Macdonald's 1988 thriller, set in North Africa, about two sisters who become fugitives when one of them kills an attacker in self-defense. From the Goldthread Theatre Company. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 947-8844.)

CLOSER—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/5/99.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE COUNTESS—A drama by Gregory Murphy, about the tangled relationship between the nineteenth-century art critic John Ruskin, his wife, and Ruskin's protégé John Everett

Millais. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 594-2826.)

DEAR LIAR—Marian Seldes and Donal Donnelly portray Mrs. Patrick Campbell and George Bernard Shaw, in a drama that Jerome Kilty based on letters written during the forty-year clandestine love affair between the actress and the playwright. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

DEATH OF A SALESMAN—The casting of this production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

IL FESTINO—A jazz adaptation of the Renaissance composer Adriano Banchieri's group of madrigals for carnival, from Voice and Vision Theatre. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Aug. 1.)

THE GATHERING—A Shabbat dinner set during the spring of Reagan's controversial visit to Bitburg (the German cemetery where, it is believed, Nazi soldiers are buried) turns into political crossfire between a man (Robert Fass) who writes speeches for the President and his father (Theodore Bikel), who survived Dachau. It could have been a sombre, if not overly burdened, affair, but when Jesse Adam Eisenberg, who plays a precocious pre-teen about to be bar mitzvahed, skids onto the stage his comic, sputtering energy ricochets off his grandfather's august cynicism and sets the tone of the tightly scripted first act. The mood slows to a more ponderous pace in the second. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 239-6200.)

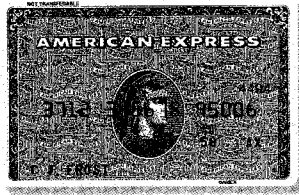
GOODBYE, MY FRIDUCHITA—With the help of some heavy eyebrow pencil, Priscilla López bears an uncanny physical resemblance to the Mexican Surrealist painter Frida

Kahlo, and she convincingly captures the artist's fiery spirit. Anilú Pardo, a Mexican actress and choreographer, is also riveting, as the young Frida, who engages her older self in a kind of dialogue out of time. It's a visually electric portrait, enhanced by thumping choreography and massive projections of Kahlo's art, but there's a little too much Frida onstage; it's a pity that the artist Diego Rivera, Kahlo's husband and lifelong obsession, never drops by to give his version of certain anecdotes, which, told entirely from Kahlo's point of view, seem rather one-sided. Written by Dolores C. Sandler. (The Directors Company, 311 W. 43rd St. 712-7458. Closes Aug. 7.)

HURRAH AT LAST—The main character of Richard Greenberg's latest play is a whiny,



"Automatic Earth," by Kevin Cunningham, staged by 3-Legged Dog.



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LOTS OF PLOTS: Every summer since 1994, a mom-and-pop theatre company known as Expanded Arts has transformed a Lower East Side parking lot into an enlightening venue for Shakespeare. The audience, and curious locals, are free to wander in and out of the lot during the action. "Richard III" is set in and around a Ford Malibu; it's a surprisingly effective staging that shows the whole world of the play—the goings on in King Edward's court in the far corner, Richard plotting against him in the foreground—while life in the city goes on around it. No matter where the audience looks, they're likely to experience the oft-mentioned but too rarely felt universality of Shakespeare.

money-obsessed novelist called Laurie (Reg Rogers), and he is clever (has Greenberg ever created a main character who is not?) without being compelling. It doesn't help matters that he has a bad cold and is stuck in a hospital bed during most of the second act; his fevered perceptions are rarely revelatory. Directed by David Warren. (6/14/99) (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 719-1300.)

ICE FACTORY FESTIVAL—SoHo Think Tank's summer shindig highlighting new works continues with "Vortex du Plaisir," a dark comedy involving four strangers and a deck of pornographic tarot cards dating from the fifteenth century, written and directed by Gordon Dahlquist. July 28-31 at 7. The festival continues through Aug. 14. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

IF LOVE WERE ALL—Twiggy and Harry Groener star as Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward, in this appealing revue-cum-remembrance by Sheridan Morley; the pair sing some twenty Coward songs and portray, with

sweetness and without sentimentality, the remarkable lifelong friendship between the two, who met when Noël was twelve and Gertie fourteen. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

I'M THE ONE THAT I WANT—The comedian Margaret Cho tells the story of her disastrous descent into Hollywood, as the first Asian-American to have her own sitcom. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 14.)

IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES—A marvellous collection of songs performed by a dynamic cast. The music alone could have showcased the influence of the blues, but instead the audience is subjected to explanatory notes and bad-talk-show banter. Fortunately, the blues triumphantly survives even this. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THE JOY LUCK CLUB—Susan Kim's adaptation of the Amy Tan novel, staged by the Pan Asian Rep. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

MACBETH—The Classical Theatre of Harlem's version, performed outdoors. (Harlem School of the Arts Courtyard, St. Nicholas Ave. at 141st St. 539-8828. Closes Aug. 1.)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM—The Shakespeare Project's rambunctious production, playing in parks around the city, makes for a delightful summer evening. In a neat conceptual twist, the fairies are puppets (created by Ralph Lee, of the Village Halloween Parade) manipulated by the actors; the technical strains of acting while puppeteering do show at times, and the cast is mixed, but it's hard to quibble in the face of so much fun. (For information about dates and locations, call 946-1869. Closes Aug. 15.)

PETER PAN—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby stars in a limited engagement of the 1954 musical. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

RICHARD III—Shakespeare in the Park(ing Lot), from Expanded Arts. (Municipal Parking Lot at Broome and Ludlow Sts. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 253-1813. Closes Aug. 7.)

SNAKEBIT—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy-drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer jokes, more "issues"). (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T SAY PAST MIDNIGHT—Peter Ackerman's screwball bedroom comedy consists mainly of a sublimely ridiculous conference call involving three pairs of lovers. The questions about sex and the proper balance between intellectual and physical attraction have no answers, but Ackerman has some interesting suggestions, and, to his credit, comedy outweighs the theorizing. John Rando, the director, has a good eye, and the show comes off beautifully. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

THIS LIME TREE BOWER—A delightful tale (by Conor McPherson, who also wrote "The Weir") of three young Irishmen, each of whom goes off the rails in various ways but, with a little help from the other two, is able to put his life back together again. Neatly told as a series of overlapping monologues, the play is funny and sharply observed, and sweet without being sentimental. A perfect antithesis to this season's blockbusters. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

THWAK—Comic acrobatics (both physical and vocal) from the Australian performers David Collins and Shane Dundas, a.k.a. the Umbilical Brothers. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

THE WEIR—Conor McPherson's play takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub, where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns that fill the air with glimmers of fear and resignation. It has a bittersweet charm, but for all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, it is finally a shaggy-bog story. (4/12/99) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOOTLOOSE:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOSSE:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riveview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL &**

HYDE: Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. ... **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. ... **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. ... **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. ... **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. ... **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. ... **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. ... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. ... **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. ... **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. ... **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. ... **SIDE MAN:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. ... **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. ... **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. ... **SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE:** HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. (Closes Aug. 15.) ... **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. ... **WIT:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.

OUT OF TOWN

WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL—Main Stage: Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun," directed by Jack Hofsis. Viola Davis, Gloria Foster, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson are in the cast. Closes Aug. 1. ... Nikos Stage: "Chaucer in Rome," a new comedy by John Guare, about a group of people who, at the end of the millennium, make a pilgrimage to Rome seeking absolution. July 28-Aug. 1. (1000 Main St., Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3399.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL—"Twelfth Night" (through Aug. 22) runs in repertory with "Titus Andronicus" (through Aug. 21). (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575.)

DANCE

PILOBOLUS—The Connecticut-based sextet concludes its summer season of three programs, each with a premiere ("A Selection," about a troupe that misses a train out of Nazi Germany; "Uno, Dos, Tray," about a pair of soldiers and a waitress; or the solo "Femme Noire"). The company's airy repertory works, created over the past quarter-century, make awkward and astonishing movements appear natural. Acrobatic, with strong modern-dance technique, Pilobolus offers a fun and stimulating evening. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 26-30 at 8 and July 31 at 2 and 8.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA—Flamenco dance presented in an intimate *tablao* fashion by the nine-member company made up of three dancers (including the incomparable Soledad Barrio), two guitarists, a bass player, and three singers (including the wonderfully *sol y sombra* combination of singers Rafael Jimenez and Antonio Vizarraga). (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. July 27-30 at 8 and July 31 at 7 and 10.)

"REMEMBERING JESUS: THE TRIP BACK HOME"—Valerie Winborne, a former member of Urban Bush Women, premieres an evening-length work about the evolution of her faith, a sort of dance of innocence and experience. (Gowanus Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave., Brooklyn. 718-832-0018. July 30-31 at 8 and Aug. 1 at 3.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL—The juggler/dancer/mime/performance artist Michael Moschen juggles with crystal balls, rubber balls, torches, cardboard cylinders, and metal whirligigs so deftly that his solo performance takes on qualities of metaphysical play. (July 28-29 at 8, July 30 at 8:30, July 31 at 2 and 8:30, and Aug. 1 at 2.) ... **"Underground River,"** presented by Jane Comfort Company. (July 29-30 at 8:15 and July 31-Aug. 1 at 5.) (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

STEVE MILLER BAND/GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS—One is a joker and a midnight toker; the other is bad to the bone. Together, they deliver an evening of classic-rock nostalgia. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. July 28 at 7:30.)

RALPH STANLEY/THE SELDOM SCENE—Bluegrass, about as good as it gets. (Castle Clinton, Battery Park. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 835-2789. July 29 at 7.)

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN—The Boss is back, working his way with the E Street Band through a fifteen-night run. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. July 29 and Aug. 1-2 at 7:30.)

MINISTRY—Long before Trent Reznor got his first metronome, Al Jorgensen and his minions were making industrial-strength techno-metal with electronic machines (though the group's disowned first album, "With Sympathy," is a quaint New Wave classic). Recent efforts have grown depressingly monochromatic but, live, Ministry is still capable of giving its fans a religious experience. (Rose-land, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. July 30 at 7.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE—Live music in New York City's back yard. July 30 at 7: Everyone's favorite troubadour **LYLE LOVETT** leads his Large Band. With the deft blues



Moby, at the Bowery Ballroom.

guitarist **KEB' MO'**. ... **July 31 at 3:** The three fine singer-songwriters **JIMMIE DALE GILMORE**, **JOE ELY**, and **BUTCH HANCOCK** know each other well from their days in the legendary seventies country group the Flatlanders. They're giving separate performances here, but you never know. With roots rocker **Jimmy LaFave**. ... **Aug. 1 at 3:** **LUCIANO**, one of today's finest practitioners of roots reggae. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.)

PAUL SIMON AND BOB DYLAN—In which popular music's two poet laureates embark on a summertime ramble. Expect ol' Rhym'n' Simon to kick out the hits (if only to reclaim a little artistic capital lost in the "Cape-man" fiasco); hope for Dylan to rise to the occasion, spurred on by the healthy competition. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 30-31 at 8.)

"WARM UP 2"—An outdoor music series in the courtyard of P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center. This bill, organized by *index* magazine, brings together Tommy Boy mogul **DJ Monica** (a.k.a. Monica Lynch), the Washington, D.C., drum-and-bass outfit **Thunderball**, the all-girl punk band **Quixotic**, and guitarist **Brother J.T.**, who will be backed by the

thrashing art rockers **Oneida**. (22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City. 718-784-2084. July 31 at 4.)

EDDIE PALMIERI—The expert ensemble of salsa pioneer pianist Palmieri employs the rhythmic swelter of Latin music to provide a base for fervent jazz improvisation. At this outdoor concert in Harlem, the rumble of pummelled keyboards, pounding congas, and blasting horns might well be heard clear to the Bronx. (Plaza at Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 650-7148. July 31 at 6.)

THE ISLEY BROTHERS/KOOL & THE GANG/THE GAP BAND/MORRIS DAY AND THE TIME—The original kings of funk, two pretenders to the throne, and a former member of Prince's "Purple Rain"—era court funk it up in the amphitheatre by the sea. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 1 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

(Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—July 28: The fine country sounds of singer **KELLY WILLIS**.

BOWERY BALLROOM, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—July 27-28: **FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS**. The former Pixies front man continues his strange journey. July 29: You would be hard pressed to find a more unlikely pop star than **MOBY**. The thirty-three-year-old musician is an avowed Christian, a vegan, and the great-great-grandnephew of Herman Melville. But his specialty is electronic music, and the outspoken, photogenic Moby became the first poster child of that technologically driven, faceless genre seven years ago. The role never really fit, though. Moby was eclectic, injecting punk, heavy metal, and even classical music into his work; it was maybe a bit too much, and his splash was soon forgotten. The time away from the spotlight looks like it served him well, judging from his exceptional new album, "Play," which samples, to astonishing effect, Bessie Jones and other early-twentieth-century African-American artists recorded by folk-music archivist Alan Lomax. July 30: The semi-pornographic psychobilly act **NASHVILLE PUSSY** features a female guitarist and a female bassist who have a tendency to take their affection for each other to eye-popping levels. The music's awful, but they put on a rather entertaining show. July 31: **MAN... OR ASTRO MAN?** The space-age stowaways from Alabama who play lo-fi surf punctuated with sci-fi samples from the fifties. With the Lonesome Organist, a.k.a. Jeremy Jacobsen, a master of the organ, piano, drums, guitar, vibraphone, and marimba.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—July 29: **MATT (GUITAR) MURPHY**, of "Blues Brothers" fame.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—July 30: Boston-based folkie **ELLIS PAUL**. July 31: **SPOTTISWOODE AND HIS ENEMIES**. Jonathan Spottiswoode, the backbone of this tight sextet, writes astringently morose ballads about love, and his deep, rough-hewn voice will make you think of Leonard Cohen. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 29: What better way is there to cope with the heat than to break into a sweat while shaking to the hardcore, rapid-fire delivery of **BEENIE MAN**, the reigning king of dancehall reggae? Beenie Man (né Moses Davis) started recording in his native Kingston at the age of eight, and with his sharp verbal skills he's practically owned the top of the Jamaican charts ever since. Last year, his album "The Many Moods of Moses" caught fire with urban hip-hop radio stations, received a Grammy nomination, and put Beenie Man on the cusp of stardom (he now has a deal with Virgin). His latest release, "The Doctor," is packed with unadulterated, high-test dancehall.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—July 28: Singers and guitarists Catherine Ann Irwin and Janet Beveridge Bean started the brainy country outfit **FREAKWATER** a decade ago. Along the way they picked up bassist David Wayne Gray and earned a well-deserved reputation for eerie harmonies and mordant songwriting. Freakwater's sixth album, "End Time," adds drums and a full string section. This is

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 2: **RANDY WESTON'S AFRICAN RHYTHMS**. Pianist Weston has steeped himself in the music of North Africa, but there's still plenty of Brooklyn bop left in his piano. Combining the jagged pith of Thelonious Monk, the fragrant harmony of Duke Ellington, and the nasty rhythm of Bud Powell, he has a musical personality as urban as the M.T.A. His

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream." Moreau (1826-98) is loosely confined within the context of symbolism, an aesthetic sensibility more than a



Straight outta Kingston: dancehall-reggae master Beenie Man comes to Irving Plaza.

country fleshed out the way it should be. Aug. 2: New Orleans blues pianist **HENRY BUTLER**. Aug. 3: Keyboardist **JOY ASKEW**, a veteran of Peter Gabriel and Joe Jackson's groups, performs her own exotic pop.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—July 30: **JIMMIE DALE GILMORE** (see Central Park SummerStage, in Concerts). Aug. 1: **MAN... OR ASTRO MAN?**, and the Lonesome Organist (see the Bowery Ballroom).

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—July 28-29: **MICK TAYLOR**. The former Rolling Stones guitarist appears with his All Star Blues Band. Aug. 2: **JAZZ IS DEAD**. At their best, the Grateful Dead approached the improvisational fluency of a fine jazz ensemble, so it's only natural that jazz-leaning fusioners would have something to say about the Dead's music. The players here include onetime Weather Report bassist Alphonso Johnson, Dixie Dregs keyboardist T Lavitz, and Jimmy Herring, the guitarist for Bruce Hampton's Aquarium Rescue Unit.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BAMCAFÉ, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—An airy space in Brooklyn's house of culture. July 30: The horn-heavy, continually evolving collective **FREE RADICALS** produces a wildy eclectic fusion that has as many influences as there are items in the Houston, Texas, pawnshop in which they honed their sound during all-night jam sessions. The mark of such musicians as Henry Threadgill, Charles Mingus, James Brown, and the Skatalites can be heard on the twenty-nine songs on the band's self-produced debut CD, "The Rising Tide Sinks All," which, by the way, features fifty-five musicians. Expect fewer live performers, but no less of a wild show.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 1: Count Basie was one smart cookie. By the fifties, he had already devised a blueprint for a big band that, in contrast to his scrappy, soloist-driven ensembles of the thirties and forties, would rely on the ingenuity of arrangers and the authority of well-executed horn charts. The present-day **COUNT BASIE BIG BAND** still runs on that time-tested formula, so swinging satisfaction is guaranteed. Vocalist **MARLENA SHAW** leads a tribute to Basie collaborator Joe Williams, the already sorely missed master singer. Dining.

African leanings come out in the expansiveness and deep soulful groove that permeate the proceedings. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL**.

JAZZ STANDARD, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—"Remembering Wes" (July 28-Aug. 1) finds the quintet of saxophonist **JAMES SPAULDING**, organist **MEL RHYNE**, drummer **RAY APPLETON**, guitarist **PETER BERNSTEIN**, and conga player **MILTON CARDONA** paying tribute to guitarist Wes Montgomery, who, thirty-one years after his death, is still the undefeated champion of six-string soul and chops. Emotions might run high—Rhyne is an old Montgomery associate, and Spaulding is another Indianapolis native who was touched early on by the great guitarist's sound. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—July 30: Museum-quality Dixieland with the **PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND**. Aug. 2: As a mainstay of the World Saxophone Quartet, saxophonist and flutist **OLIVER LAKE** may be a linchpin of the avant-garde jazz tradition, but he's also got an undeniable Caribbean-music jones. His group Jump Up takes on reggae, and his Steel Band incorporates steel drums and island rhythms into the jazz mix. A strong bass-and-drum team—**REGGIE WASHINGTON** and **PHEEROAN AKLAFF**—keep things hopping.

LENOX LOUNGE, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—July 30-31: The **CHARLES DAVIS** quartet. Davis may be the last of the few imposing baritone saxophonists who assumed bebop as their native tongue. His striking rhythm section includes pianist **TARDO HAMMER**, who's just released an impressive trio session, "Hammer Time," and local legend drummer **JIMMY WORKWORTH**.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Aug. 1: The **CHRIS POTTER** quartet. A tenorist whose lean melodicism can remind you of Joe Henderson at his craftiest, Potter employs his considerable technique in the service of music rather than spectacle. An unusually intelligent player who also excels on soprano and alto saxophones and bass clarinet, Potter recently played in Dave Holland's ensemble, a late-nineties seal of approval for young jazzmen. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

movement, characterized as much by avant-gardism as by more traditional artistic impulses. Most of the paintings and drawings in this exhibition come from the Musée Gustave Moreau, in Paris, the artist's former residence; it remains the ideal environment in which to experience his sensorially rich, often weird and violent pictures. Nevertheless, this show offers ample opportunity to reconsider the artist. Uninspired by the innovations of Courbet's realism and the succeeding generation of Impressionists, Moreau also disdained academic technique; instead, he forged a singular style, drawing inspiration from Italian Renaissance, medieval, Japanese, Mughal, and other sources. Curiously, his works—with their combination of drawing and painting, tenebrous chiaroscuro and jewellike color—look fresher now than many Impressionist canvases, which, through the sheer number of shows devoted to them, are beginning to seem like so much visual white noise. Through Aug. 22... ¶ "Prayerbook for a Queen: The Hours of Jeanne D'Evreux," approximately three dozen illustrated pages by one of the masters of medieval illumination, Jean Pucelle (active 1320-34), are on view. Through Aug. 29... ¶ In an adjacent gallery, a related show called "Devotions and Diversions" displays some of the finest northern-European books from the dawn of printmaking. Through Aug. 29... ¶ "Cézanne to van Gogh: The Collection of Dr. Gachet." More than fifty works (by Monet, Pissarro, Guillaumin, Sisley, Renoir, and, above all, Cézanne and van Gogh) owned by van Gogh's doctor have travelled across the Atlantic for the first time. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Different Roads: Automobiles for the Next Century." Nine vehicles designed for the next century, a sort of high-performance art, snag the city's best parking spots—in the Rockefeller Sculpture Garden. Through Sept. 21... ¶ "The Un-Private House." Rather than just present his selection of twenty-six recent house designs as the lively grab bag that it is, curator Terence Riley tries to dress it up as a form of

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cultural trend-spotting. As far as ideas go, this show is pure bluff. A couple of the projects here—most notably Shigeru Ban's hilarious Curtain Wall house—seem to be intended for clients who have nothing to hide from their neighbors, but for the most part privacy seems to be on the rise. With their lap pools, ten-thousand-volume libraries, home offices, and high-tech multimedia amenities ("Residents can entertain friends who live thousands of miles away"), most of these lavish dwellings seem like scaled-down variants of Superman's Fortress of Solitude. But, if you set ideas aside, the show is a delight: it's thrilling to see so many genuinely adventurous, even kooky, home designs, and the abundance of scale models makes the exhibition unusually accessible to non-architects. Through Oct. 5. . . . ¶ "Fame After Photography." Departing from the Modern's usually crisply didactic installation mode, guest curators Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman opt here for an almost unintelligible, jam-packed exhibition of printed, photographic, and cinematic materials that illustrate the bliss and blight of our celebrity-driven culture. For the patient viewer, there are plenty of droll, pathetic, and even aesthetic delights, e.g., a series of publicity pictures of Hollywood's most enduring Medusa, Joan Crawford, and Timothy Greenfield-Sanders's strikingly empathetic portrait of a very pretty Monica Lewinsky. Some of the requisite "art" photographs are tediously predictable, given the show's theme (Nadar's portraits of George Sand and Charles Baudelaire, for instance, or one of Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills"). But three of Andy Warhol's famous but seldom seen "Screen Tests" are exceptional. Did you know that Susan Sontag did one? Through Oct. 5. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Surrealism: Two Private Eyes." A vast exhibition composed of work from the separate collections of publisher Daniel Filipacchi and the late Nesuhi Ertegun, who, as a partner with his brother Ahmet, owned Atlantic Records. The show is rich in terrific works, including such iconic Surrealist masterpieces as René Magritte's "The Rape" (1934), Salvador Dalí's "The Phenomenon of Ecstasy" (1933), and Giorgio de Chirico's "The Disquieting Muses" (1925), and it has two astonishing rooms—one devoted to Cornell boxes, the other to Surrealist bookbinding. There is a lot of marvellous or, at the very least, curious work by lesser-known artists; on the other hand, there is a lot of dreck, both by unknown figures and by famous ones having a bad art day. Through Sept. 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The American Century: Art & Culture 1900-2000 (Part I: 1900-50)" is exactly what its unimaginative title implies—a grand, bland survey, full of familiar milestones but remarkably short on fresh connections or surprises. There's plenty to see, however: the six-hundred-odd works include architectural models, furniture, ceramics, magazine covers, and kitchen appliances, as well as canonical paintings and photographs. Ideally, the museum's educational mission should dovetail with its aesthetic one; here, the history lesson takes over, making for a dutiful, stolid, rainy-day resource. Through Aug. 22; Part II opens Sept. 26. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth is open, with rock formations, ice-core samples, earthquake and volcanic-events tickers, and other geologic displays. . . . ¶ "Epidemic! The World of Infectious Disease." Through Sept.

6. . . . ¶ "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition." Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Winslow Homer: Illustrating America" offers more than a hundred wood engravings, including many made when the artist was covering the Civil War. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ "Impressionists in Winter: Effets de Neige." Through Aug. 29. (Open Tuesdays for the Impressionist show only, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—"The Huguenot Legacy: English Silver, 1680-1760." In the late seventeenth century, England became a big importer of tea, coffee, chocolate, and Huguenot craftsmen. The result of this odd confluence was a boom in silverware production. French designers, sometimes working for English firms, produced novelties like coffeepots and teakettles as well as newly elaborate sauceboats, tureens, salvers, and saltshakers. The hundred examples here, all from the collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, include some amazingly lavish pieces. The most beautiful might be an understated fluted ladle by Paul Crespín; the most dizzying, a scallop-shell basket by Phillips Garden, has wriggling dolphins for feet and a handle in the form of a mermaid doing a backflip. Through Aug. 8. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—"Papiers à la Mode: Illusions of Fashion" presents twenty-five hand-painted paper dresses—including a "gold and silk" 1745 Venetian court dress and a "satin and velvet" Victorian evening gown—whose elaborate trompe-l'oeil effects were created by Isabelle de Borchgrave and Rita Brown. Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

OUT OF TOWN

KATONAH MUSEUM OF ART, Route 22 at Jay St., Katonah, N.Y. (914-232-9555)—"WILDFLOWERS," an exhibition of contemporary floral imagery, gathers paintings, sculptures, photographs, and videos by forty artists, including Fred Tomaselli, Joan Nelson, Thomas Woodruff, Sally Apfel-

baum, and Richard Rothman. Through Oct. 3. (Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer-hours warning: Many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.)

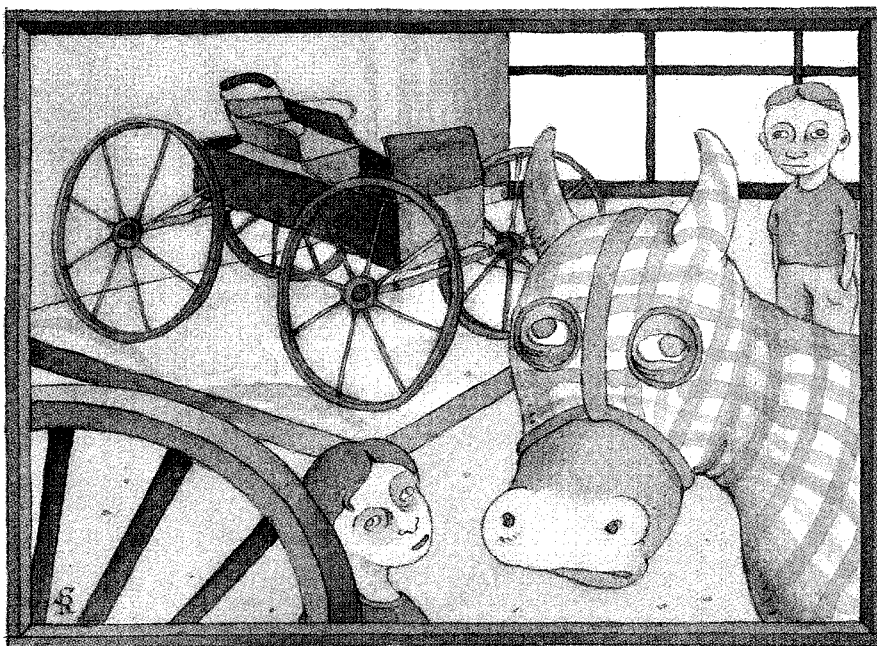
PETER SAUL—Ten gleefully lowbrow paintings by cartoon figuration's *chef d'école*. In one of his latest pictures, a quartet of pink putti flutter mournfully over the body of Bouguereau's Venus, who has decomposed to the point where she resembles a platter of nachos topped with melted cheddar. It's a relatively sedate image compared with some of the earlier pieces on view, in which Saul's manic misanthropy is directed at O. J. Simpson, Jeffrey Dahmer, Ronald Reagan, and Peter Schjeldahl, the chief art critic for this magazine. The Reagan piece in particular is one of Saul's finest works. Through Aug. 12. (Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

"THE CARRIAGE ERA IN NEW YORK"—Eight sleek and beautifully designed vehicles from a century ago, including a conveyance for summer, an elegant wicker Three Spring Basket Beach Phaeton, displayed with accessories: a serious picnic basket, for instance, with a lid to a ceramic butter dish held down by a leather strap and buckle, and horse clothing, in linen as well as the more traditional wool. See also examples of the original accelerator—a vitrineful of whips and crops for all seasons and needs. Through Sept. 10. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. 713-2885.)

SHORT LIST—**MICHAEL BRENNAN**, Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. 265-8876. Through July 31. . . . **HERBERT BROWN**, Gat, 1100 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. 327-0441. Through Sept. 30. . . . **ADRIANE HERMAN**, Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338. Through July 30. . . . **JASPER JOHNS**, Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 489-3331. Through July 31. . . . **JAN MATULKA**, York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Through July 30. . . . **ODD NERDRUM**, Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through July 30. . . . **MAY STEVENS**, Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Aug. 25.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ROBERT DEVRIENDT/"DRAWINGS"—Devriendt, a Belgian artist, has titled his first New York solo show "About Nature, About Painting," and he seems very much immersed in the traditions of Flemish and Dutch still-life. Tiny, exquisitely rendered oil paintings of



"The Carriage Era in New York," at the PaineWebber Building.

birds, deer, dead fish, and the like stand alone or are arranged in series. This show will no doubt delight those who mourn the eclipse, if not the disappearance, of realistic genre painting. A large group show of artists from the United States, Britain, and Europe, some of whom have never shown in New York before. There is no overriding theme or formal preoccupation, except perhaps a fondness for squiggly doodles which is shared by several artists. The only name artist here is the late Belgian Conceptualist Bas Jan Ader (he disappeared at sea during the performance of one of his works); the only watercolor he ever painted, an homage to Mondrian called "Piet Niet," is included. Both shows through July 31. (Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 243-3335.)

BILL KING—"Pompeii," a quintet of the artist's life-size long-legged figures in cast aluminum. Four of them wear expressions of demented excitement which seem at odds with their rather ordinary occupations: one writes in a diary, another chews on an hors d'oeuvre, and two others pucker up for a big-screen-style kiss. King's brand of humorous figuration has always been precariously silly, and a bit lightweight. At their best, though, as in this group, his gaunt personages can seem as tart and deft as Daumier's. Through July 31. (Brenda Taylor, 529 W. 20th St. 463-7166.)

"HANG TIME"—A summery group show, curated by Debra Singer and Lauren Ross, with works by nine artists (or art teams) devoted to leisure and sport: Pam Lins photographed Nerf footballs in midflight, Janet Cohen charted baseball pitch location, Cristian Alexa documented his protest against the daily grind (he lay around in a hammock in a park near Wall Street). Through Aug. 1. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 924-4212.)

GROUP SHOW—Robert Gober, renowned for his creepy and melancholic sculptures of drains, sinks, and urinals, among other symbolically charged talismans of the home and of everyday life, has organized a group exhibition that speaks strongly to his own preoccupations. The show is very much an installation, with unusually dim lighting and the grating noise of a saw (it's the audio track from "Spiked Buck," Robert Beck's video of someone insistently sawing the antlers from a decapitated stag). Through Cady Noland's cheaply fabricated, abstract stocks (the instrument of corporal punishment, not the corporate share) one catches glimpses of Anni Albers's exquisite gray-and-white Bauhaus textile grid. On facing walls, Gober has installed Joan Semel's large-scale paintings of nude couples; in certain paintings, the lovers display a pronounced pallor, as if they had been laid out on mortuary slabs rather than on beds. In the back gallery, Nancy Shaver's series of black-and-white photographs (1975-77) of found pieces of children's clothing has a hapless, forlorn air. Like Christian Boltanski's treatment of similar childhood themes, the pictures savor of forensic pathology. Gober's show is without doubt the most ambitious group exhibition of the summer: Welcome to the House of Dispassionate Horrors. Through Sept. 10. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.)

GROUP SHOW—A trio of painters—Luke Dowd, Chris Faust, and Frank Webster—with a slackerish penchant for inert geometric forms, suburban architecture, and washed-out, anemic colors. This may not sound like much of a premise, but the pictures themselves, especially Faust's economical views of bungalows and swimming pools, have a kind of lethargic, slow-release charm. Through July 31. (Martz, 529 W. 20th St. 206-3686.)

SHORT LIST—**SAINT CLAIR CEMIN**, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through July 30. . . . **LAURA EMRICK**, Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through July 30. . . . **RUDI MOLACEK**, Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494. Through July 30. . . . **MICHAEL PAHA**, Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500.

Through July 30. . . . **RIRKRIT TIRAVANUJA**, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Through Aug. 31.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JOHN ARMLEDER and SYLVIE FLEURY—These Swiss artists have assembled two sprawling exhibitions that share a provisional, mockup feel. Armleder's "Mondo Tiki," a big steel-and-wood scaffolding furnished with television sets playing B movies, is a classic instance of the generic nineties installation piece: shapeless and inert, it dares you to ignore it. Smaller works, including a room occupied by six revolving disco balls, are only marginally more engaging. Fleury's half of the show has a clearer point of view; it includes exercise videos, a bisected Camaro painted a glittering mauve, and a gaggle of rocket ships covered in fake fur. But most of these quasi-feminist conceits feel one-noteish, not to mention dated. "BE AMAZING," one Fleury piece admonishes, to which viewers might be tempted to respond, "You first." Both shows through Aug. 28. (Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599.)

JOAQUÍN TORRES GARCÍA (1874-1949)—Works on paper by this fine B-list modernist, who was born in Uruguay but spent much of his life in Barcelona and Paris. The earliest of the more than forty pieces on display include several sprightly cartoonlike drawings of Jazz Age New York, made during a sojourn here in the early twenties. From the artist's later years, there are dozens of buoyant and orderly Constructivist compositions. Some of these are pure abstractions, composed of staggered cylindrical compartments. Others, as in "Tradicción," seem like miniature warehouses of pictographic symbols. Through July 31. (Cecilia de Torres, 140 Greene St. 431-5869.)

"MINIMALIA"—A walk-in freezer's worth of cool, pale austerity. Of the seven artists included here, the two youngest, Callum Innes and Wolfgang Laib, are each represented by a pair of works. The older generation (Agnes Martin, Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, and Roni Horn) get one small work apiece. Evidently, Robert Ryman, who is present in spirit, has been accorded the still higher honor of being absent. For those who suffer from *amor vacui*, however, this will feel like a beautifully selected, intimate show. Through Aug. 13. (Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405.)

"MIXUP"—An erratic but entertaining exhibition of projects that blur or cross the boundary between fine art and design. Highlights include a speaking punching bag (by Natasha Makowski and Gel-D, an industrial-design team) and a hypothetical advertising campaign for a revolutionary movement (by the graphic designer Daniel Jasper). Most memorable is an audio project by Tobias Frere-Jones, who is, oddly enough, a type designer. By converting meteorological data into sound waves, "Fahrenheit = Hertz" represents a year's weather in a strangely appealing, nearly danceable form. Who knew that Mother Nature sounded so much like the Beastie Boys? Through July 30. (Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753.)

"SIGNS OF THE TIMES"—A seductively motley collection of hand-painted road signs, advertisements, and yard art, some of it dating back to the nineteenth century. With their crudely lettered exhortations to "Drink Howdy" or "Put No Paint on Roses," most of these humble icons conjure a cheery, quizzical nostalgia. A weathered plank marked with a circled X and the legend "Crossroads," however, is delightfully ominous, like a relic conjured out of a Robert Johnson song. Worth a detour. Through Sept. 3. (American Primitive, 594 Broadway. 966-1530.)

SHORT LIST—**BARTON LIDICE BENEŠ**, Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through July 30. . . . **AUSTIN THOMAS**, Sara Meltzer's On View, 588 Broadway. 343-8256. Through July 30. . . . **SUSAN WANKLYN**, Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 925-9424. Through Aug. 16.

BOOK CURRENTS

City of Dreams



Now that the Viennese writer and libertine Arthur Schnitzler has suddenly become big box-office—David Hare's *THE BLUE ROOM* (Grove) was an adaptation of Schnitzler's most famous play, "La Ronde" (1903), and Stanley Kubrick's "Eyes Wide Shut" is based on the novella "Traumnovelle" (1926)—the raffishly amoral spirit of fin-de-siècle Vienna is enjoying a renaissance. Schnitzler, who as a medical student had written a dissertation on neurosis, was influenced by another adventurous Viennese, Sigmund Freud. The admiration was mutual; in the introduction to his new translation of *FOUR MAJOR PLAYS* (Smith and Kraus), Carl Mueller quotes a letter from Freud to Schnitzler expressing envy that the playwright could have intuited "this or that secret knowledge which I was able to discover only after arduous examination."

A remarkable set of photographs in *SIGMUND FREUD: VIENNA IX. BERGGASSE 19* (Universe), taken in 1938 by Edmund Engelman, provides a tour of Freud's house, complete with analyst's couch, bulging bookcases, and a large collection of antiquities. The swastika above the front door is an alarming reminder that the city had just fallen under Nazi rule and that Freud was preparing to emigrate. *HITLER'S VIENNA* (Oxford), by Brigitte Hamann, tries to penetrate the myths of the dictator's formative years as a frustrated painter in Vienna. Hitler, she says, detested the city's cosmopolitanism and restless avant-garde and took great pleasure in relocating its art treasures to other cities when he took power. A happier phase in the city's history is examined in Eve Blau's *THE ARCHITECTURE OF RED VIENNA, 1919-1934* (M.I.T.), a photographic chronicle of how the imperial city was rebuilt to promote socialist ideals. The architects of this program were horrified when the residents insisted on filling their sleek new functionalist apartments with "pictures of royalty, postcards and artistically vulgar reproductions, and particularly . . . homemade antimacassars."

MICHAEL WITTE

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Plunge into a Great Read

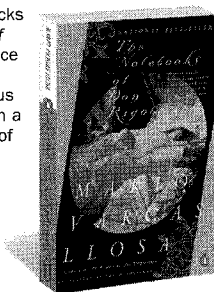
THE NOTEBOOKS OF DON RIGOBERTO

by Mario Vargas Llosa

Vargas Llosa's novel of eroticism and humor picks up where his scandalous bestseller *In Praise of the Stepmother* left off. Don Rigoberto, insurance executive and pornographer, his passionate second wife Lucrecia and his sexually precocious son Alfonsito are the three sides of a triangle in a deliciously seductive fable exploring the power of love, art and the imagination. (Penguin)

Pub. Price: \$12.95 **Discount 10%**

Our Price: \$11.65



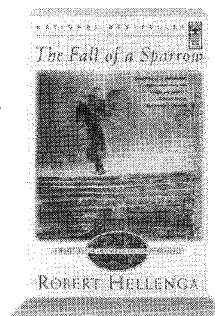
THE FALL OF A SPARROW

by Robert Hellenga

The bestselling author of *The Sixteen Pleasures* examines the life of an American college professor disgraced by an act of infidelity, who travels to Italy for the trial of the terrorists responsible for his daughter's death. In an unforgettable odyssey of discovery, the professor seeks to make sense out of a senseless act—and to find redemption for his sins. (Scribner Paperback Fiction)

Pub. Price: \$14.00 **Discount 10%**

Our Price: \$12.60



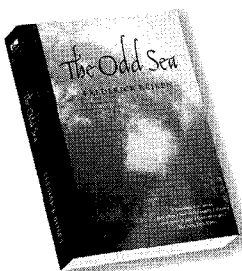
THE ODD SEA

by Frederick Reiken

In a taut and tender-hearted novel of family love and loss, the adolescent narrator tells the story of the seemingly inexplicable disappearance of his older brother. As the family navigates the dangerous waters of *The Odd Sea*, they are compelled to confront a haunting mystery—and the darkest of possibilities. (Delta)

Pub. Price: \$9.95 **Discount 10%**

Our Price: \$8.95



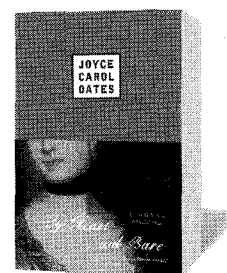
MY HEART LAID BARE

by Joyce Carol Oates

Mythic in scope, *My Heart Laid Bare* traces the magnetic charm and adroit criminality of a 19th-century American family of confidence artists. As bold and wild as the country itself, the larcenous Lichts travel from the wide-open trails of the West to the corridors of power in the East inventing marvelous money-making schemes and scams every step of the way. (Plume)

Pub. Price: \$13.95 **Discount 10%**

Our Price: \$12.55



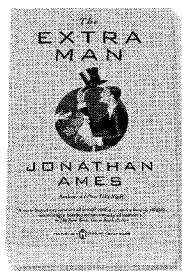
THE EXTRA MAN

by Jonathan Ames

Louis Ives has a taste for blue blazers and sports coats. But he also has a thing for women's clothing, which costs him his teaching job at Princeton. Heading for New York, he takes a room in the apartment of Henry Harrison, a failed playwright working as an escort for rich widows. In a charming comedy of manners, Ives enters a funny and flamboyant world of cross-dressing, sexual confusion and secret lives. (Washington Square Press)

Pub. Price: \$12.00 **Discount 10%**

Our Price: \$10.80



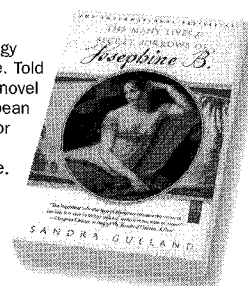
THE MANY LIVES AND SECRET SORROWS OF JOSEPHINE B.

by Sandra Gulland

This is the acclaimed first volume in a trilogy inspired by the life of Josephine Bonaparte. Told through her fictionalized diary entries, the novel traces her journey from the world of Caribbean Voodoo to the prisons of the Reign of Terror and, ultimately, into the bed of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose destiny she would share. (Scribner Paperback Fiction)

Pub. Price: \$14.00 **Discount 10%**

Our Price: \$12.60



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PHOTOGRAPHY

WILLIAM GEDNEY (1933-89)—If Edward Hopper had taken pictures, chances are they would have looked like this: nightscapes of deserted urban and rural buildings (white-washed houses, Mobil gas stations), duskily lit by street lamps—at once serene and disturbing. Unlike Hopper's scenes, Gedney's glowing black-and-white prints are devoid of people, yet they can be just as eerie. (A long, sleek Oldsmobile Super 88 parked in front of two columned San Francisco town houses spells intrigue.) The pictures, presented here for the first time (they were part of a series the artist intended to call "The Single Future of the Night"), were taken between 1965 and 1975, on numerous cross-country road trips. They are all rather similar yet still striking, and they speak tellingly of a lonely America. Through July 31. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

JAMES KARALES—Like the *Life* photographer W. Eugene Smith (Karales started out as Smith's assistant), Karales is of that fine breed of photojournalists with a documentarian's instinct for a story and an artist's instinct for composition. In a series completed in the fifties, in the old mining town of Rendville, Ohio (which was then one of the country's few racially integrated working communities), the shadows of three barns stand at strict attention, as if acceding to the photographer's demand for perfect lines. In later years, as Karales's subjects became more charged (the Selma Freedom March, Vietnam), his style loosened—tones grew darker and forms less ordered. Through July 31. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

RAY K. METZKER—Metzker studied at the Chicago Bauhaus in the mid-fifties with two masters of urban perception and abstraction, Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind. He was soon shooting in Chicago's Loop and in the broad streets and squares of Philadelphia, concentrating on quiet but tense moments—slanting light illuminating three kids in the shadows of a concrete housing project, or a lone sailor trundling his duffel out of the darkness. He developed an intimate urban poetry that, for all its attention to pattern, had much in common with the deep-shadow Harlem paeans of Roy DeCarava and the grainy, damaged America of Robert Frank. This survey, mostly of Metzker's early city pictures, includes complex images that are bracing in their contrasts of dark and light and, most palpably, of loneliness and hope. Through Aug. 13. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930.)

"APOLLO II: ONE GIANT LEAP"—Celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the mission, with images from liftoff to footfall to splashdown. Through Aug. 20. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

"STARS & STRIPES"—Images of Old Glory in photographs, folk art, and outsider art. Through Aug. 14. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY—"Sea Change: The Seascape in Contemporary Photography." Through Sept. 26.... ¶ "Myths, Dreams, and Realities in Contemporary Argentine Photography." Through Sept. 26. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

SHORT LIST—**DAVID LA CHAPPELLE**, Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through Sept. 15.... **JUDITH JOY ROSS**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through Aug. 27.... **EZRA STOLLER** and **HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON**, Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Through Aug. 13 and Aug. 31, respectively.... **FRANCESCA WOODMAN**, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Through Aug. 31.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the American Museum of Natural History.)

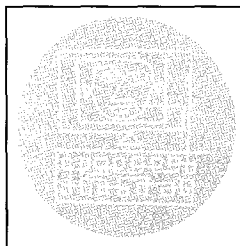
CLASSICAL MUSIC

IN TOWN

"MUSIC IN THE GARDEN"—This outdoor series concludes with a program of operatic excerpts, performed by sopranos Tracy Bidleman and Ilya Speranza, mezzo-soprano Deana Insley, and pianist Kelly Horsted. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. July 28 at 7:15. Admission by contribution.)

MOSTLY MOZART—July 28 at 8: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in his own symphonic arrange-

ONLY CONNECT



BALLPARKS (<http://www.ballparks.com>)—We hate to agree with George Steinbrenner about anything, but a visit to Yankee Stadium does reveal the place's flaws (uncomfortable seats, lousy concessions, bomb-shelter aesthetics)—especially when it's viewed in light of the alternatives that are laid out on this sports fanatics' site.

Here a fan can follow baseball pilgrim Ray Bergman on a 1996 tour of the twenty-eight major-league baseball parks (it took him two months) and enjoy his ratings (best of the old: Wrigley Field; best of the new: Jacobs Field, in Cleveland) if not always his writing. Imagine the sugarplums that must dance in Steinbrenner's head when he looks at the Map of Future Ballparks. San Francisco's Pacific Bell Park, for instance, slated to open next April, is the first privately funded ballpark since 1962, when Dodger Stadium opened. (It will hold about twenty thousand fewer people than the current 3Com, né Candlestick, Park, but you can walk there from downtown.) The future ballpark proposed by the Mets, modelled in living plastic, is meant to resemble the Brooklyn Dodgers' lost home, Ebbets Field.

Football stadiums and basketball and hockey arenas are given equal time, but it's baseball season—so who cares? The site's authors, Paul Munsey and Corey Suppes, are downright smitten with their subject matter (clicking on the baseball area sets off the dubious attraction of a very loud sound clip of an oompah version of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame"), and it shows in their attention to detail. For anyone planning his own baseball odyssey, there are aerial views of each park, brief team histories, team schedules, and seating charts for each ballpark. The site is updated regularly, and it features links to all the official team sites and a handful of fan sites—which include accounts of ballpark pilgrimages like Bergman's. Maybe there's nothing new under the sun here, but, as that model of the Mets' future dream park suggests, when it comes to baseball, originality can be overrated.

ment of excerpts from Bach's "The Art of Fugue" and Haydn's Symphony No. 100, as well as Mozart's "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" Overture, his D-Major Flute Concerto (featuring James Galway), and arias from "La Clemenza di Tito," "Don Giovanni," and the C-Minor Mass (all with mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade). (Avery Fisher Hall.)... ¶ July 29 at 8: The Emerson String Quartet plays Beethoven's

Quartets in F Minor (Op. 95) and is assisted by violist Michael Tree in Mozart's G-Minor String Quintet and by pianist Stephen Hough in Brahms's Piano Quintet. (Avery Fisher Hall.)... ¶ July 30 at 8: Pinchas Zukerman leads the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Michael Haydn's G-Major Divertimento and D-Major Flute Concerto (both spotlighting Emmanuel Pahud, the principal flutist of the Berlin Philharmonic), Mozart's Piano Concerto in F Major (K. 459, with Alicia de Larrocha), and Schubert's Symphony No. 3. (Avery Fisher Hall.)... ¶ July 31 at 8: The Schubert and Mozart works as above, plus Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-Flat Major (K. 364, with violinist Viviane Hagner and with Mr. Zukerman as violist). (Avery Fisher Hall.)... ¶ Aug. 1 at 3: In its American debut concert, the New London Consort, directed by Philip Pickett, performs musical-theatre works from Baroque England by John Blow, Matthew Locke, Purcell, Handel, and Giovanni Battista Draghi. (Alice Tully Hall.)... ¶ Aug. 3-4 at 8: Adam Fischer conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in the Overture to Cimarosa's "Il Matrimonio Segreto" and three works by Mozart: the Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 271, featuring Lars Vogt), the motet "Exsultate, jubilate" (with soprano Ruth Ann Swenson), and the Symphony No. 41. (Avery Fisher Hall.) (For information about Mostly Mozart tickets, call 721-6500.)

NATALIA KHOMA AND VOLODYMYR VYNNYSKY—The cellist and the pianist perform Beethoven's "Variations on 'Bei Männern'" and his Cello Sonatas No. 2 and No. 3. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. July 29 at 1. No tickets necessary.)

"THE AMERICAN CENTURY"—A series of hour-long recitals, connected with the Whitney Museum of American Art's exhibition about art and culture in twentieth-century America, continues with wind quartets and quintets by Barber, Cage, Carter, Piston, and Amy Beach. (Madison Ave. at 75th St. July 29 at 6:30. No tickets required beyond museum admission; for more information, call 877-944-8639.)

BARGEMUSIC—July 29 at 7:30 and Aug. 1 at 4: Randall Hodgkinson performs Chopin's B-Minor Piano Sonata and is joined by violinist Jennifer Frautschi and cellist Fred Sherry for piano trios by Beethoven (the "Ghost") and Shostakovich (in E Minor)....

¶ July 30 at 7:30: Mr. Sherry is assisted by composer and pianist Charles Wuorinen in the latter's "Fast Fantasy" and "An Oracle of Jasp," as well as in pieces by Stravinsky and Debussy, among others. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

PARTY ON, ACCORDION—The American Accordionists' Association descends on New York for its annual convention, an event that manages to be serious and nutty at the same time. This year's gathering, optimistically named "Accordions 'Round the Table: \$/Power/Prestige/Performance!," includes lectures and workshops on such topics as "The Accordion in War-Torn Europe," "Accordio-Graphics (The Architecture of Travel)," and "Accordion/Organized Crime" (which recalls the lethal lexicographer Ambrose Bierce's definition of the accordion as "an instrument in harmony with the sentiments of an assassin"). The convocation's three concerts (every evening at 7) include works by Carter and Berio, Thomas Matusucci's "The Politics of Belowing," and numerous works by convention organizer William Schimmel, including his "The Dolls," a staged cantata inspired by Jacqueline Susann's "Valley of the Dolls." (Tenri Cultural Institute, 575 Broadway. July 30-Aug. 1. For information, call 876-0827.)

SUMMERGARDEN—In this installment of the Museum of Modern Art's summer series of twentieth-century music, which focuses this season on women composers from around the world, Joel Sachs conducts a chamber orchestra in pieces by Gabriela Ortiz, Kaija Saariaho (her "Gaal Théâtre," featuring violinist Tom Chiu), Melissa Hui, and Sonia

Jacobsen (the premiere of "The Butcher-bird," an exercise in polycultural stylistic fusion which celebrates the pious butcher-bird, noted for drying its carrion in the wind before consuming it). (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 30-31 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

"SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND"—Presenting music by Beethoven and Brahms (his A-Major Piano Quartet). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Aug. 1 at noon.)

OUT OF TOWN

(A selective listing of festival events within a reasonable drive from New York City. Call the presenters for complete schedules.)

TANGLEWOOD—July 28 at 8:30: The Emerson String Quartet plays quartets by Beethoven (in F Minor, Op. 95) and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (her Second); Stephen Hough joins the group for Brahms's Piano Quintet. . . . July 29 at 8:30: Violist Yuri Bashmet and pianist Xenia Bashmet (his sister) perform sonatas by Glinka and Shostakovich; violinist Malcolm Lowe, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and pianist Emanuel Ax join Mr. Bashmet for Schumann's Piano Quartet. . . . July 30 at 8:30: Yuri Temirkanov conducts the Boston Symphony in Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Horacio Gutierrez) and Sibelius's Symphony No. 2. . . . July 31 at 8:30: Brahms's "A German Requiem," with Edo de Waart leading the Boston Symphony, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and soloists Janice Chandler (soprano) and Nathan Gunn (baritone). . . . Aug. 1 at 2:30: In the annual Leonard Bernstein Memorial Concert, Seiji Ozawa conducts the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra in Bartók's complete score for the kinky ballet "The Miraculous Mandarin" and Strauss's "Don Quixote" (featuring Messrs. Bashmet and Ma). . . . Aug. 3 at 8:30: Soprano Dawn Upshaw and pianist Gilbert Kalish offer an all-American program that includes Lukas Foss's "Time Cycle" and pieces by Michael Torke, John Musto, and James Primrosch. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

SARATOGA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER—Charles Dutoit conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra at its summer home. July 28: Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3, as well as cello concertos by Richard Danielpour and Dvořák (both featuring Yo-Yo Ma). . . . July 29: An all-Tchaikovsky program that includes the Violin Concerto (with Leonidas Kavakos) and the "Rococo Variations" (with Han-Na Chang). . . . July 30: As an accompaniment to performances of John Williams's "Star Wars Suite" and Holst's "The Planets," moonwalker Buzz Aldrin narrates a big-screen projection of what's going on in the solar system, as viewed from an unmanned NASA spacecraft. . . . July 31: Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. (Evenings at 8:15. Saratoga, N.Y. 518-587-3330. . . . **NOTE:** The concurrent Saratoga Chamber Music Festival includes recitals this week featuring the husband-and-wife duo-pianists Emanuel Ax and Yoko Nozaki, on Aug. 1, and violinist Chantal Juillet, on Aug. 3.) (Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 518-587-3330.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA—July 29 at 8 and July 31 at 1:30: Monteverdi's "Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria." . . . July 30 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 2: "Central Park," a triptych of one-act operas: Deborah Drattell's "The Festival of Regrets," with a libretto by Wendy Wasserstein; Michael Torke's "Strawberry Fields," with a libretto by A. R. Gurney; and Robert Beaser's "The Food of Love," with a libretto by Terrence McNally. . . . July 31 at 8 and Aug. 3 at 2: "Rigoletto." . . . Aug. 1 at 2: "The Abduction from the Seraglio," in English. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

CARAMOOR—July 30: Colin Carr offers a two-part recital of Bach's Suites for Unaccompanied Cello; at 6:30, the Suites No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4; at 9:15, the Suites No. 5 and No. 6. . . . Aug. 1 at 4:30: The Tokyo

String Quartet plays Beethoven's D-Major Quartet (Op. 18, No. 3), Webern's "Langsamer Satz," and Wolf's "Italienische Serenade"; pianist Misha Dichter assists in Dvořák's A-Major Piano Quintet (Op. 81). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

ASTON MAGNA FESTIVAL—Violinist Daniel Stepper and pianist John Gibbons offer period-instrument performances of sonatas by C.P.E. Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven (including his "Kreutzer" Sonata). (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 914-758-7425. July 30 at 8. . . . St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 31 at 6. For information about tickets, call 800-875-7156.)

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL—July 30 at 8: Music by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms, performed by clarinetist David Krakauer, cellist Ralph Kirshbaum, and pianists Claude Frank, Lilian Kallir, and Elizabeth Sawyer Parisot. . . . July 31 at 8: The Tokyo String Quartet performs quartets by Haydn (in G Major, Op. 77, No. 1), Webern

Op. 18, No. 3) and Chausson (in A Minor, Op. 35), as well as Dvořák's A-Major Piano Quintet (Op. 81, with Michael Boriskin assisting). . . . Aug. 1 at 3: Haydn's "The Seven Last Words of Christ," with the lugubrious broadcaster Robert J. Lurtsema delivering a narration. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE BEAT GOES ON—The poet and performer John Giorno is a sixty-two-year-old former cohort of Warhol, Burroughs, and plenty of other major avant-garde literary or arts figures. He starred in Warhol's movie "Sleep," and he was one of the first artists to mix poetry with technology (back in 1968 he created Dial-a-Poem). On July 29 at 8:30, he brings his unique brand of performance poetry to Central Park SummerStage, in an evening that also includes dance cho-



The American Accordionists' Association convenes at the Tenri Cultural Institute.

(his "Langsamer Satz"), and Schubert (the "Death and the Maiden"). (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3000.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS—July 31 at 8: Parthenia, a viol consort, performs English music by Purcell and his contemporaries. . . . Aug. 1 at 3: Maverick Concerts' survey of Shostakovich's quartets continues, with the Cavani String Quartet playing his Ninth. In fact, this work was Shostakovich's second Ninth Quartet; of the first, written in 1961, he wrote, "In an attack of healthy self-criticism, I burnt it in the stove." Apparently, the ensuing quartet, composed three years later, uses none of the earlier piece's material. Though one of the less familiar in Shostakovich's cycle of fifteen quartets, the "new" Ninth is rich in musical and emotional variety, and its scherzo was reputedly among Shostakovich's favorite creations. Also on the program are Mozart's Quartet in D Major (K. 575) and Brahms's String Quintet in G Major (Op. 111, with violist Setsuko Nagata assisting). (Woodstock, N.Y. 914-679-8217.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN—Two recitals by the Ludwig String Quartet, from Paris. July 31 at 8: Quartets by Beethoven (in D Major,

reographed by David Neumann. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.)

READINGS—July 29 at 7:30: By Esther Allen, from her translation of Marie Darrieussecq's novel "My Phantom Husband," and Jenny McPhee, from her translation of Paolo Maurer's novel "Canone Inverso." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary). . . . Aug. 3 at 7: By Donna Allegra, Peggy Munson, David Ebershoff, Lawrence Reilly, and other contributors to "Hers 3: Brilliant New Fiction by Lesbian Writers" and "His 3: Brilliant New Fiction by Gay Writers." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary). . . .

Aug. 3 at 8: By Marcelle Karp, Debbie Stoller, and other contributors to "The Bust Guide to the New Girl Order," a collection of essays from *Bust* magazine. (Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. No tickets necessary.)

TOUR—July 31 at 9:30 A.M.: Environmental scientist Abu Moulta Ali leads a cruise up the Gowanus Canal organized by the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment. (For more information, call 718-788-8500.)

OPENING

DEEP BLUE SEA—Renny Harlin's thriller about a super-intelligent, genetically reengineered shark. Opening July 28.

RUNAWAY BRIDE—A romantic comedy, with Richard Gere and Julia Roberts, directed by Garry Marshall. Opening July 30.

TWIN FALLS IDAHO—A story about the lives of two conjoined twins. With Michael Polish (the director and co-writer) and Mark Polish (co-writer). Opening July 30. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

FILM NOTES

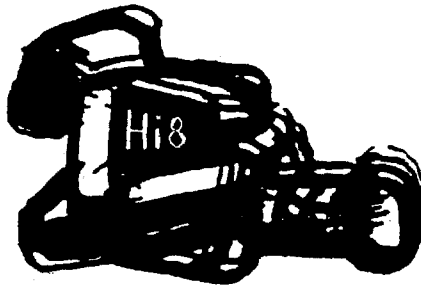
(If a movie has been reviewed recently in *The Current Cinema*, the date of its review is given.)

AMERICAN PIE—Four senior boys at a Michigan high school decide to end their status as virgins and undergo various erotic adventures—some ridiculous or humiliating, some gratifying—which they then relate to one another. The writer, Adam Herz, and the team of Paul and Chris Weitz (the first directs, the second produces) aim low and score. "American Pie" is often funny, but you may come out depressed by it. The coarseness in itself is not offensive, but the notion that privacy couldn't possibly be a value that matters to anyone is.—*David Denby* (7/12/99) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Union Square, and Waverly.)

ARLINGTON ROAD—Jeff Bridges spends most of this movie looking extremely worried, and so would you if you thought a major American terrorist had moved in across the street. Bridges plays a college lecturer, specializing in terrorism, who befriends a neighbor couple named the Langs (Tim Robbins and an even scarier Joan Cusack); the question is whether they are befriending him back or using him for evil purposes. Mark Pellington's paranoid movie tends to state its intentions too baldly, and his evident desire to contribute to the debate over America's self-inflicted wounds seems like wishful thinking; but the film is undoubtedly creepy (the first ten minutes, in particular, are tough to watch), and most of the shocks strike home. What will divide viewers is the plot; either the ending makes no sense or it forces you to rethink everything that went before. At least the moral of the picture is unambiguous: if you want to live, don't look in other people's mailboxes.—*Anthony Lane* (7/19/99) (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME—A crud classic, featuring the return of Mike Myers as the grinningly fatuous Brit-twit spy. Ostensibly a parody of the Bond movies, the Austin Powers comedies are closer to a celebration of the redeeming power of shamelessness. But there are also lots of depressing scatological jokes, candy-colored mod sets, goony mock-sci-fi scenes, and too many exuberantly bad ideas that wear down fast. Directed by Jay Roach.—*D.D.* (7/5/99) (Cinema II, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

BIG DADDY—Anyone looking to solve the mystery of Adam Sandler's mass appeal is not going to do it here. In his latest film, he adopts a little boy in order to get his girlfriend back, and, of course, each teaches the



THE MOVIES

other lessons about love and responsibility. Sandler lacks any kind of discernible comic energy; he's just meandering around the film waiting for something to happen, and almost nothing funny does.—*Bruce Diones* (84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Union Square.)

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT—A cunningly conceived and crafted exercise in suggestibility and terror. A student film crew, led by a determined young woman named Heather Donahue, goes out into the Maryland woods, attempting to record traces of a predatory witch who has, according to legend, held sway in the area for two hundred years. What we see is presented to us as the remnants of the project after the crew has disappeared. The footage has the haphazard continuity of tormented fragments; it's all handheld stuff, caught on the run. Tents, woods, isolation, increasing fear, and then ambiguous terrors suggested by such commonplace materials as some sticks tied together or rocks placed outside the crew's tent. The documentary project is, of course, fiction, created by five film nuts from Orlando, headed by Eduardo Sanchez, Dan Myrick, and Gregg Hale. If it doesn't play at midnight on every college-campus

theatre in the country, then midnight isn't what it used to be. In black-and-white and color.—*D.D.* (7/26/99) (Angelika Film Center and 84th Street Sixplex.)

THE BLUE KITE (1994)—A refined, strong-minded political drama, all the more telling for being so quiet. The director, Tian Zhuang-zhuang, smiles at a country awash with banners and slogans and makes you realize that opposition comes not from more of the same but from the bemused responses of provincial people too busy with their own lives to be led astray. The story begins, in 1953, with the death of Stalin, and lasts until 1967; in that time, a young boy named Tietou grows up and goes through three fathers, each of them laid low by persecution. Tietou is a pain to his long-suffering mother, and his misbehavior is just the first stirring of a rebellious spirit. In Mandarin.—*A.L.* (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 3.)

LE BOUCHER (1969)—Another tone poem on a thriller theme by Claude Chabrol; he provides all the elements for a thriller except the zinger. This fluid, beautifully controlled, but very minor film was shot in a serene village in the Périgord and features the exquisite Stéphane Audran, with Jean Yanne as the melancholy, frustrated butcher. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Walter Reade Theatre; July 30-Aug. 1.)

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB—In 1996, the blues guitarist Ry Cooder gathered together some wonderful Cuban musicians in their seventies and eighties for a successful recording project. Two years later, Cooder went back to Cuba, this time accompanied by cameras and the German director Wim Wenders, seeking out the men and women of Cuban music on the streets and in the old dance halls of Havana. The musicians still look great, play beautifully, and exude a stirring seriousness and dignity; the movie comes closer to pure happiness than anything else in the theatres at the moment.—*D.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

THE DINNER GAME—Francis Veber's movie sounds disappointingly courteous; the original French title, "Le Dîner de Cons," is much ruder and certainly closer to the misanthropic spirit of this farce. The premise is as entertaining as you could hope for: every Wednesday, a bunch of smart young Parisians hold a dinner, to which each of them must invite a complete idiot. In this case, Pierre (Thierry Lhermitte) is delighted with his latest catch, Pignon (Jacques Villeret), a spherical buffoon whose principal talent is for making models out of matchsticks. Needless to say, Pierre's plan stumbles when Pignon offers to help him sort out his life. No one could claim that the film is a distinguished contribution to cinema, but it would be churlish to resist its geniality and speed. In French.—*A.L.* (Paris.)

EYES WIDE SHUT—A stiff, alas. The late Stanley Kubrick's last movie, based on Arthur Schnitzler's novella "Traumnovelle" (1926), is about a New York doctor (Tom Cruise) whose wife (Nicole Kidman) unexpectedly confesses her sexual interest in a young naval officer she spotted during a vacation. This revelation sends the doctor out into the streets of New York at night, where he is approached by a variety of women, undergoes perverse adventures, and finally winds up at an enormous, preposterous orgy, at which men in cloaks and naked masked women disport themselves without apparent pleasure or energy. The doctor's adventures are perhaps meant to be a voyage through the unconscious, but they remain unconnected visually to the early marital scenes. Instead, they float



Opening July 30, Michael Polish's "Twin Falls Idaho."

free, and all the details seem wrong. Kubrick's direction—ponderously deliberate and distant, lacking in the intimacy that the movie would seem to be crying out for—never gets a firm grip on either fantasy or reality. The maddening two-note piano composition during the orgy is by György Ligeti. The adaptation is by Kubrick and Frederic Raphael.—*D.D.* (7/26/99) (Astor Plaza, Coronet Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE HAUNTING—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

AN IDEAL HUSBAND—Oscar Wilde's languorous play, newly adapted for the screen by writer and director Oliver Parker. The plot pits dastardly blackmail against upright honor, and one is scandalized, as ever, to find that honor wins the fight. The radiant Mrs. Cheveley (Julianne Moore) turns up in London and unearths a spot of compromising dirt from the past of Sir Robert Chiltern (Jeremy Northam), a tediously unsullied politician. He has a perfect wife (Cate Blanchett), an irritating sister (Minnie Driver), and a friend called Lord Goring (Rupert Everett), who shines like a naughty deed in a good world. So automatic is one's sympathy for Goring, and for Everett's low-toned, cunning performance, that the rest of the story, and most of the cast, feels thin and strained by comparison.—*A.L.* (7/5/99) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Square.)

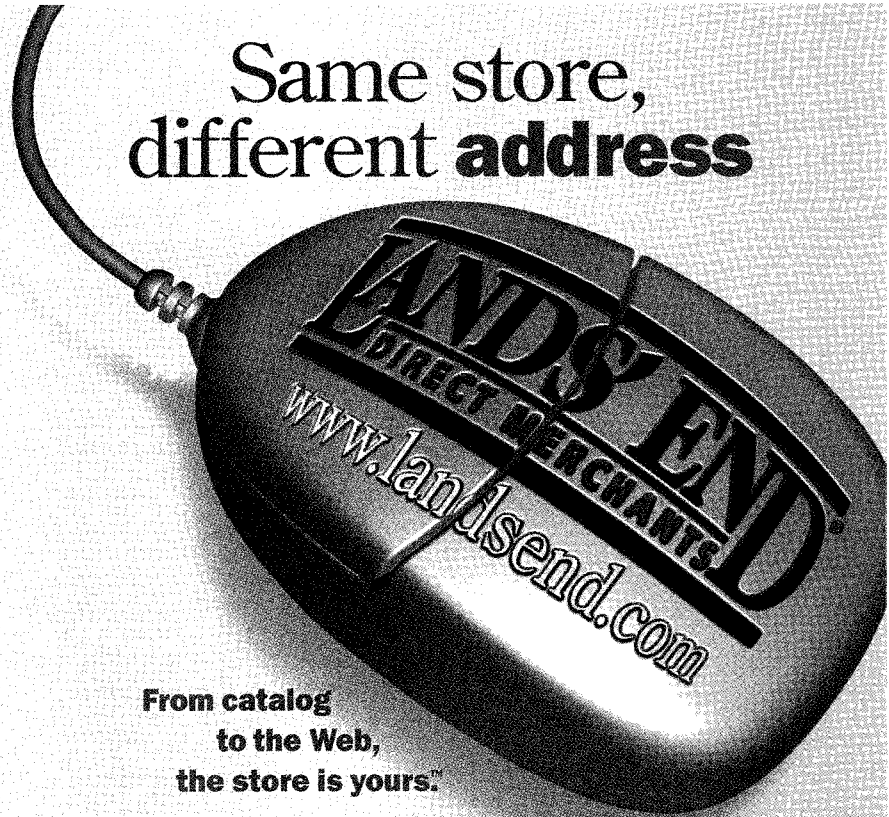
INSPECTOR GADGET—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Union Square, and Waverly.)

THE LOVERS ON THE BRIDGE—Delayed for almost a decade, Leos Carax's long and gloriously infuriating movie has finally made it to these shores. Set around 1989, when France was celebrating the bicentennial of the Revolution, it is mostly set on the Pont-Neuf, the oldest bridge in Paris. Carax can hardly bear to leave the place, and neither can his characters: a tramp called Alex (Denis Lavant) and a half-blind runaway named Michèle (Juliette Binoche). They stumble into love, and their inarticulate affair is expressed in a storm of elemental images: grime, water, fire, and booze. Few films cover such a forbidding distance; Carax starts with handheld shots of the Parisian homeless and gradually rises to the climactic serenity of a waterskiing sequence along the Seine, with fireworks serenading the ecstatic Binoche. Like much of the picture, the scene makes very little sense, but it hooks into Carax's romantic, antisocial provocations, and you aren't going to forget it in a hurry. In French.—*A.L.* (7/19/99) (Film Forum.)

MY SON THE FANATIC—The great Indian actor Om Puri gives a memorable performance as Parvez, a quiet Pakistani taxi-driver living in a dreary northern-England industrial town. For years, the assimilated Parvez has worked to provide for his family, only to have his son suddenly reject Western values and then compound the insult by inviting a group of hungry fundamentalist hangers-on into the house. The writer, Hanif Kureishi, and the director, Udayan Prasad, work the culture clash for comedy and for anguish, too—Parvez, waking up emotionally, falls in love with one of the prostitutes (Rachel Griffiths) he's been driving around, and the fundamentalists, including Parvez's son, go berserk.—*D.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin and 34th Street Showplace.)

THE NADA GANG (1974)—In this welcome anomaly, Claude Chabrol, rarely an overtly political director, cunningly applies the conventions of busted-caper movies to the tale of a woebegone Paris-based group of militant leftists who kidnap the American ambassador. Chabrol's plague-on-all-your-houses attitude stands out from the impas-

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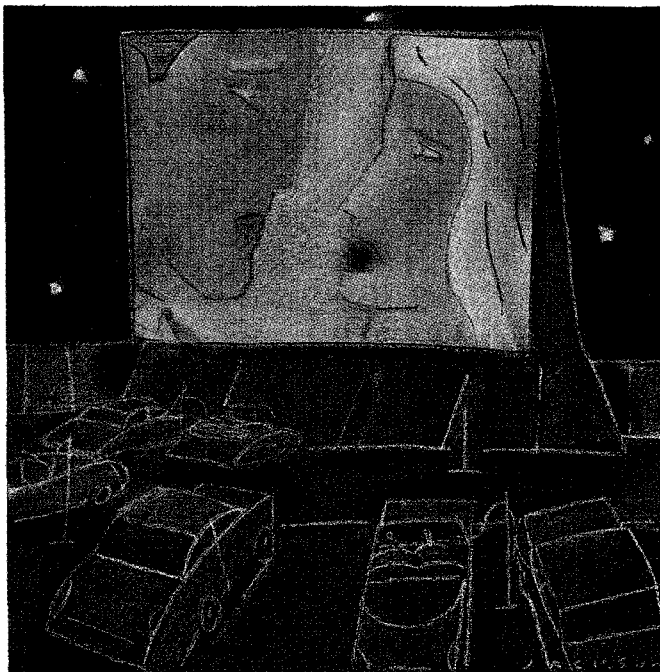
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sioned simplicities of seventies partisan cinema, and the synthesis of gangster-film plotting and current events is wry and gripping in turn. Inevitably, the conspirators split—over the practice of terrorism, not over dames or their cut of the ransom. But as in many an American noir film, the forces of the state are more savage and underhanded than the criminals. When one Nada guy kills a cop with a slingshot or when the only Nada gal (Mariangela Melato—the most engaging performer) realizes that there's no surrender for revolutionaries, the director sets off unexpected jolts of pathos in an absurd yet tragic melodrama. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 2.)

PARIS IS BURNING (1991)—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the



empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes), military men, Wall Street businessmen, aristocrats at play. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image, fetish, and the iconography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery.—*Terrence Rafferty* (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 2.)

PULP FICTION (1994)—Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Bruce Willis, and—best of all—John Travolta parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waits just around the corner. Watching the result is like going to a long, loud party. The next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you. It had to happen, and Quentin Tarantino was the man to deliver it: cinema as fast food.—*A.L.* (Museum of Modern Art; July 30 and Aug. 1.)

RUN LOLA RUN—Lola (Franka Potente), a ferociously willful punk girl with orange hair, has twenty minutes to come up with a hundred thousand marks and save her hapless boyfriend, Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu), from the wrath of a big-time gangster. The writer-director, Tom Tykwer, shows us one version of what happens, and then he gives us two others, each of which takes off from the initial circumstances but has the characters make different decisions along the way, producing different climaxes. The action of the movie is rush, rush, rush—Lola runs through Berlin—but the effect is contemplative, almost metaphysical. In German.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959)—A comedy set in the Prohibition era, with transvestism, impotence, and role confusion—all hilariously innocent, though always on the brink of really disastrous double-entendre. Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are the musicians who witness the St. Valentine's Day Massacre and then hide out from the mobsters by disguising themselves as women and joining an all-girl band. Marilyn Monroe and Joe E. Brown are their somewhat confused love partners. Directed (unevenly) by Billy Wilder.—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; starting July 30.)

SOUTH PARK: BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT—Trey Parker and Matt Stone's television-cartoon phenomenon gets a big, splashy, singing-and-dancing, R-rated feature-film debut—and it's pretty damn fat-ass funny. Basically a rant against the motion-picture rating system, the movie features more foul language than "Fritz the Cat," and the exploits of Stan, Kyle,

Kenny, and Cartman—who are trying to save South Park from a conflicted Devil (his boyfriend, Saddam Hussein, doesn't appreciate him)—are really just an excuse for some wonderful musical numbers that parody both Disney and Broadway.—*B.D.* (First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

STAR WARS: EPISODE I—THE PHANTOM MENACE—It has been more than twenty years since George Lucas directed a movie. Amid the fuss that has attended his return to the fray, no one seems to have wondered whether he was up to the task. With this film, Lucas demonstrates two facts: one, that he has kept abreast of the recent leaps in special effects, and two, that he hasn't a clue what to do with all the nondigital figures, otherwise known as "people."—*A.L.* (5/24/99) (East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

SUMMER OF SAM—In the sweltering New York summer of 1977, David Berkowitz, the psychotic killer known as Son of Sam, terrorizes the city while, in the Bronx, young Italian-Americans seek pleasure in sex and disco. Spike Lee suggests that we are all David Berkowitz—the madness is everywhere. Slamming different kinds of experience together, Lee tries to do with montage what he cannot do with dramatic logic. John Leguizamo gives a large-scaled, brilliant performance as Vinny, the hairdresser and disco

king who cheats on his beautiful wife (Mira Sorvino).—*D.D.* (7/12/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII.)

TARZAN—Raised by apes, the new, animated Tarzan walks with his heavy shoulders leaning forward and his knuckles dragging along the ground. He's the most apelike of Tarzans: animation, which Edgar Rice Burroughs's material seems to have been waiting for, frees the Disney filmmakers to mix animal and human characteristics without embarrassment. This Tarzan doesn't swing from trees but courses rapidly from branch to branch, glen to glen—he treats the tree canopy and the thick undergrowth below as if they were the swells and hollows of the ocean. At its best, the movie is an exhilarating, surf-topping ride. With Minnie Driver providing the voice of a deliciously flirtatious Jane.—*D.D.* (7/5/99) (Chelsea West, East 86th Street Cinemas, Guild, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

WILD WILD WEST—Gizmos, Gatlings, and wrought-iron whatnots. This piece of over-produced maniacal whimsy is set in the Grant Administration and features a Jules Verne system of design, heavy on gadgetry and industrial fantasy. It's exhausting, utterly without feeling, and pointless—though Will Smith looks great in his Western outfit. Written by six persons who cannot tell a story; directed by Barry Sonnenfeld.—*D.D.* (7/12/99) (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, State, and Union Square.)

ZERO FOR CONDUCT (1933)—School as seen through the eyes of children. Jean Vigo's forty-four-minute comedy-fantasy about a schoolchildren's revolt is one of the most poetic films ever made and one of the most influential, both in theme (as in Truffaut's "The 400 Blows") and Lindsay Anderson's "If...") and in its leaping continuity (as in Godard's "Breathless"). Vigo himself was clearly influenced by Abel Gance's pillow-fight sequence in "Napoléon." In French.—*P.K.* (Anthology Film Archives; Aug. 1.)

ALSO PLAYING

AFTER LIFE: Cinema Village... **AUTUMN TALE:** BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema... **CABARET BALKAN:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema... **DEFYING GRAVITY:** Quad Cinema... **DROP DEAD GORGEOUS:** Criterion Center, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas... **ELECTION** (reviewed in our issue of 4/26 & 5/3/99): Murray Hill Cinemas... **THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER:** Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and State... **GENGHIS BLUES:** Cinema Village... **LAKE PLACID:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas... **THE MATRIX** (4/26 & 5/3/99): Union Square... **THE MUMMY** (5/10/99): Worldwide Cinemas... **MY BROTHER, MY SISTER, SOLD FOR A FISTFUL OF LIRE:** Film Forum... **MY LIFE SO FAR:** Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3rd Avenue... **NOTTING HILL** (6/7/99): Art Greenwich Twin and New York Twin... **THE RED VIOLIN** (6/14/99): Beekman, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square... **ROSIE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema... **RUSHMORE** (12/7-14/98): Worldwide Cinemas... **SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** (12/21/98): Worldwide Cinemas... **TEA WITH MUSSOLINI:** 59th Street East Cinema, Metro Cinema, and The Screening Room... **THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR:** Worldwide Cinemas... **TRICK:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas... **VIOLENT COP:** Cinema Village... **THE WINSLOW BOY** (5/17/99): 34th Street Showplace... **THE WOOD:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.

JEFF JACKSON

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through July 29: "Harold and Maude" (1972, Hal Ashby), with Ruth Gordon and Bud Cort... From July 30: "Some Like It Hot" (†).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films significant to the development of cinema but not currently in the museum's collection. July 29 at 2:30: "Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton)... July 30 at 2:30 and Aug. 1 at 2: "Pulp Fiction" (†)... July 30 at 6 and July 31 at 5: "Written on the Wind" (1956, Douglas Sirk)... July 30 at 8 and Aug. 1 at 5: "Dead Man" (1995, Jim Jarmusch)... July 31 at 2 and Aug. 2 at 2:30: "Babe" (1995, Chris Noonan)... Aug. 2 at 6: "Paris Is Burning" (†)... Aug. 3 at 2:30: "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, Howard Hawks)... Aug. 3 at 6: "The Blue Kite" (†)... A program of films directed by Márta Mészáros. July 29 at 6: "Just Like at Home" (1978; in Hungarian)... July 30 at 3: "Bye Bye Red Riding Hood" (1989; in Hungarian)... July 30 at 6: "Diary for My Loves" (1987; in Hungarian)... July 30 at 8:15: "Diary for My Father and Mother" (1990; in Hungarian)... July 31 at 1: "The Two of Them/Women" (1975; in Hungarian)... July 31 at 3 and Aug. 3 at 6: "Ridance" (1973; in Hungarian)... July 31 at 5: "Daughter of Luck" (1999; in Russian and Polish)... Aug. 1 at 2:30: "Nine Months" (1976; in Hungarian)... Aug. 1 at 5: "Adoption" (1975; in Hungarian)... Aug. 2 at 6: "The Girl" (1968; in Hungarian).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Claude Chabrol; in French, with English subtitles. July 28 at 4 and 8:30 and July 29 at 6:15: "Betty" (1993)... July 28 at 6:15 and July 29 at 4 and 8:30: "The Story of Women" (1988)... July 30 at 4 and 8:15, July 31 at 6:15, and Aug. 1 at 6:15: "The Beast Must Die" (1969)... July 30 at 6:15, July 31 at 4 and 8:30, and Aug. 1 at 4:10 and 8:35: "Le Boucher" (†)... Aug. 2 at 4 and 9: "The Nada Gang" (†)... Aug. 2 at 6:45 and Aug. 3 at 4: "A Double Tour" (1959)... July 31-Aug. 1 at 2: "Them!" (1954, Gordon M. Douglas).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—July 28-29 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "La Promesse" (1997, Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne; in French)... July 30 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Wings of Desire" (1987, Wim Wenders; in German)... July 31-Aug. 1 at 1:30, 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Smoke" (1995, Wayne Wang)... Aug. 2 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Killer's Kiss" (1955, Stanley Kubrick)... Aug. 3 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of John Ford Westerns. July 31-Aug. 1 at 2: "The Searchers" (1956)... July 31 at 4:30: "The Horse Soldiers" (1959)... Aug. 1 at 4:30: "Two Rose Together" (1961).

THE 22ND ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL—Two days (July 30-31) of new films from Korea, the United States, the Philippines, Japan, Canada, and Hong Kong. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. For information, call 925-6014.)

BRYANT PARK, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with coming attractions, trailers, and cartoons. The feature on Aug. 2 will be "Carmen Jones" (1954, Otto Preminger), with Dorothy Dandridge, Harry Belafonte, Diannah Carroll, and Pearl Bailey. (For rain-date information, call 512-5700.)

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 3 at 12:30, 3:30, and 6:30: "One Deadly Summer" (1982, Jean Becker; in French), with Isabelle Adjani and Alain Souchon... Aug. 3 at 9: "Being at

Home with Claude" (1992, Jean Beaudin; in French), with Roy Dupuis.

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 1 at 7, the feature will be "Road House" (1948, Jean Negulesco), with Ida Lupino, Cornel Wilde, and Richard Widmark.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—July 28 at 8, July 29 at 7 and 9:30, July 30 at 9:30, and July 31 at 4: "The Thing Called Love" (1993, Peter Bogdanovich)... July 29 at 8 and 10: "Promised Lands" (1973, Susan Sontag)... July 30 at 7 and July 31 at 2 and 4:30: "The Meadow" (1979, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian)... July 30 at 7:30 and 10: "Duet for Cannibals" (1968, Sontag; in Swedish)... July 31 at 6:30: "Unguided Tour" (1983, Sontag)... July 31 at 7 and Aug. 1 at 2 and 4: "The Spider's Stratagem" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian)... July 31 at 8 and 10: "Brother Carl" (1969, Sontag)... Aug. 1 at 7: "Zero for Conduct" (†) and "L'Atalante" (1934, Jean Vigo; in French).

FILMS ON THE PIERS—Films made in New York City are being shown (free, with free popcorn) on two of the city piers. "The Muppets Take Manhattan" (1984, Frank Oz): July 28 at 8:30 on Pier 54 (at 13th Street) and July 30 at 8:30 on Pier 25 (at North Moore Street). (There are no rain dates.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).

BECKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.

CHELSEA WEST, 333 W. 23rd St.

CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.

CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.

CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).

CORONET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 59th St.

CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.

EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.

EAST 86TH STREET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 86th St.

EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.

84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.

FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.

GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.

KIPS BAY THEATRE, Second Ave. at 32nd St.

LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.

LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.

METRO CINEMA I AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.

NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.

19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.

OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.

ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.

PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.

THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.

64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.

72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.

STATE, Broadway at 45th St.

SUTTON I AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.

34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.

UNION SQUARE, Broadway at 13th St.

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.

VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.

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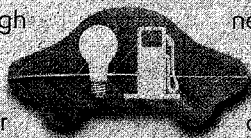
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

THE nation never forgot the little boy in shorts and pale-blue topcoat saluting the casket of his father as it passed on a sunny Washington street, but, as he later said, that was our memory, not his. John F. Kennedy, Jr., had turned three that very day, and what stayed with him was the absence of a father. He did have a memory, he told persistent interviewers, of the Presidential desk, probably from underneath, where he had been more than once photographed playing while a smiling John F. Kennedy, Sr., attempted to conduct official business overhead. We bought those images, contrived or not: young President, young family, a fresh breath of verve and hope come into the White House with the new decade. The President, at ease on television like no President before him, never seemed more genuinely warm and glad than when greeting his two scrambling tots as he disembarked from an airplane, or as he acted, at apparent leisure, the part of their father on the beach or lawn at Hyannis Port. The public was charmed to be a vicarious part of that handsome family—the father so jaunty and debonair, the mother so young, lovely, shy, and gracious.

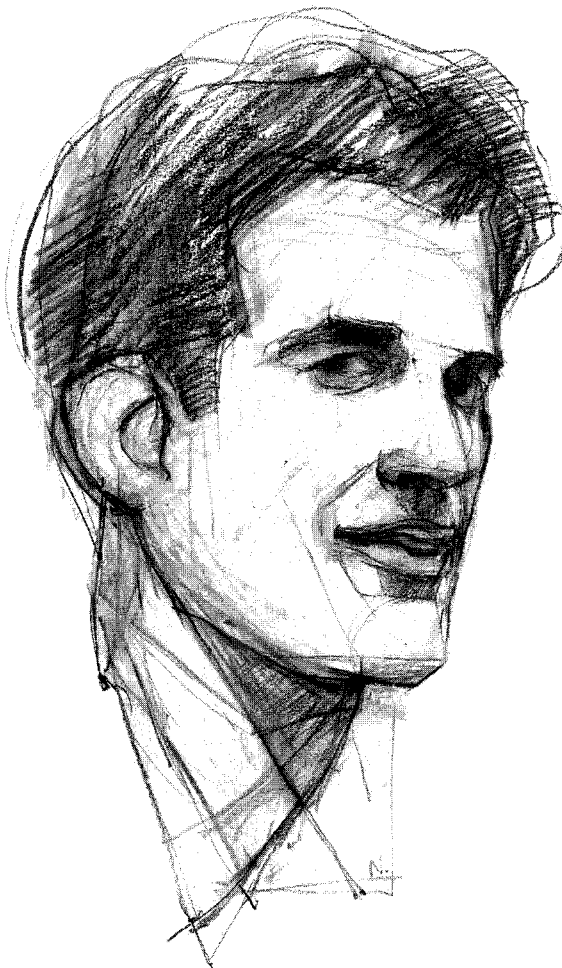
It was a long time ago, but vivid enough to those who were alive and impressionable then. Tawdry revelations and revisionist history concerning J.F.K.'s thousand days in office cannot finally tarnish the shining moment, nor can the plague of griefs and scandals that have dogged the hard-living, high-

aspiring Kennedy clan. Now America's tormented romance with this one family, just as it seemed at last outgrown, has received another stunning twist, another tragic surprise, with the death by airplane, thirty-six years later, of that three-year-old innocent bystander, John Kennedy, and of his young wife and sister-in-law.

Clips of his unforgettable salute, broadcast countless times this past week, show the black-veiled mother leaning down a moment before, whispering in her son's ear, and the obedient child wheeling and facing outward,

toward the funeral cortège, his hand bravely to his brow. Jacqueline Kennedy was to coach him for life. Kennedy was his name and the name of his fame, but in his dark Bouvier looks and soft-spoken demeanor he was her child. For most of his life, she was Mrs. Onassis. She raised him away from the Kennedy compound, its Cape clambakes and macho derring-do. He spoke with a touch of his father's calm drone but without the hard Massachusetts "a"s and dropped "r"s; he spoke cogently, even wittily, but without snap or an undercurrent of aggression. His sister, Caroline, can be recognized as one of the toothy, sad-eyed tribe of Jack and Bobby and Eunice and Ted, but John, as he became a man, seemed to have arisen purely from a *Cosmo* girl's dream book of ideal male beauty.

His phenomenal handsomeness, like his being a President's son and then losing his father to the Presidency, was something visited upon him; apart from these fascinating gifts of fate, he came on as a regular guy who just wanted to be allowed to do his thing. He had thought, in college, of an acting career—a sensible use of good looks and an indeterminate personality—but his mother talked him into law school, the broad beaten path into American politics. For him, it proved a detour into the public humiliation of flunking the bar exam twice. By the time she died, he had left the law; he became, as she had been, an editor. He founded a lighthearted political magazine, as if there could be such a thing. Politics as celebrity: who knew more about it than he? He was the pure political



celebrity, one with no apparent political ambition—though he was, of course, still young. The ordeal of running for office still lay, if he wished, before him. He left behind rather few anecdotes for the obituary writers, but Joseph Nye, dean of the Kennedy School, remembered asking him, as they stood together in a White House reception line, “Do you remember this place?” The answer came: “Only vaguely.” Nye asked, “Do you want to come back?” John Kennedy, Jr., smiled, and repeated, “Only vaguely.”

He had learned to dodge his fame with grace and skill, and he chose to marry a woman as elegantly elusive of it as he. Their wedding, on an obscure Georgia island once owned by the Carnegies, was a dashing coup of publicity avoidance. Rollerblading in a knit cap through the streets of Manhattan was another winning gesture. He turned his celebrity into a poster for his impudent magazine, and, business aside, he put the great city on its mettle and dared it to let him alone. The grandeur of his celebrity was not noticeable until his disappearance swept aside a full Saturday’s programming on all the networks. The funereal aftermath has dominated the airwaves in the week since with mythic images: the search the retrieval the famous kin hidden in their white wedding tent converted to sorrowing Masses the great gray destroyer bodying forth the sympathy of the living President the many impromptu shrines the ashes scattered in a site no more local than the sea.

The media, in making so very much of this particular bad news, imposed their own love for the newsworthy Kennedys upon the public. The news frenzy’s object might have smiled one of his light, practiced smiles of forbearance at seeing his privacy definitively invaded in one wrapup after another, and such a tide of eulogy whipped up for a man whose life, but for that gallant child’s moment in 1963, could be described as glamorous preamble. Perhaps our romance with the Kennedys is with their griefs—with the way this particular extensive family straddles, more visibly than ours, the line between life and death, as if the living and the dead are striving together toward a single objective.

The question of pilot error is cruel to raise, but reckless misadventures,

sometimes fatal to others, dot the annals of the clan, whose worthiest trait is a call to public service rather than a cultivation of its wealth. John had not yet developed the genetic political drive. We have seen more of him on television these last days than in all the years before. The softness of his speech, in this hardmouthed age, disarms us. The sleepiness in his light-brown eyes defends against the lifelong spotlight. Being born to fame is not like earning it: you have to create your own worth in other coin, you have to escape history’s shadow and get, as they say, a life. To his credit, he was trying, and seemed to be succeeding.

—JOHN UPDIKE

Coming of age in public

SIXTEEN is a terrible age for any male. You are not yet a man and no longer a boy. But for John Kennedy this wonderfully anguished age was even worse. He had to endure the scrutiny of strangers, friends, teachers, and even relatives, along with the hangers of the celebrity press. The astonishment was that he handled all of that, as an adolescent and as a man, with so much grace.

During the late nineteen-seventies, when I first knew John, we would meet at the apartment at 1040 Fifth Avenue and talk in the sitting room that faced the Park. Most of the time it was small talk: what he was studying in school and how the teachers were and what books they had ordered him to read. He was not some driven apprentice intellectual, tormented by the quest for meaning. He talked about matters in a groping, self-deprecating way and usually had many more questions than answers.

“I just don’t get this Thomas Hardy,” he said to me once, shaking his head, and then smiling. “Is that me? Or is it Thomas Hardy?”

On a few occasions, we took long walks through Central Park, where even then his face was turning heads. He asked many questions about newspapers and the craft of reporting. He displayed one most admirable quality: he did not attempt to appear smarter or hipper than he actually was. His questions were direct and free of guile.

“You mean you go, say, to a murder



Jacqueline Kennedy and John F. Kennedy, Jr., photographed by Richard Avedon in West Palm Beach, January 3, 1961.

scene, and you make your notes, and then you go back to the paper and write the story?"

"If there's time," I said. "If there's not enough time, you dictate your notes to a rewrite man, and then he writes the story."

"Wow, that's cool," he said.

When I saw him and his sister, Caroline, together, there was an obvious affection between them. He would enter their apartment with a pair of his friends—what his mother once called "these big hairy galoots"—and always seemed about to knock over at least one piece of furniture. Caroline would ease over and get between him and the potential casualty, and wink.

I don't mean that John Kennedy was an ordinary sixteen-year-old American boy; his personal history made such a role impossible. One of his relatives told me once that he was tormented by some questions, ones he had certainly never asked me. Does she love me for myself or because of my name? If I were Joe Blow, would she take my call? There's a soap-opera banality to such questions, but that doesn't make them less real to a young man.

IN the nineteen-eighties, our lives took different paths and I didn't see him for years. When he founded *George*, in 1995, I remembered his voice saying, long ago, "Wow, that's cool." There he was on television, talking to Larry King, and he was a man now, handsome, poised, articulate, and funny. He was respectful of the Kennedy family history, but he did not sentimentalize it. As a journalist, of course, he did not make notes and hurry to the office to write the story. But he did a series of solid interviews for the magazine, often with people who would have been sworn enemies of his father. In each interview, he seemed to be making a genuine effort to understand his subjects rather than debate them or demean them.

He was still in a peculiar situation: a journalist who covered other people while being covered himself. But at thirty-eight, in the last year of the century in which his father had been a central political and emotional figure, John Kennedy was most often identified as the editor of *George* rather than as his father's son. That alone was a tri-

umph. It looked as if we might get to the end of the century without another Kennedy death and another Kennedy funeral.

Maybe that's why when the news broke that John Kennedy's Piper Saratoga had gone missing I was jolted back to November 22, 1963. That day, I was in Belfast with my father, who had not been home to Northern Ireland for thirty years. My father wept. My cousins wept. The Falls Road mourned, and so did the Shankill. The handsome prince of the Irish diaspora was dead. And one line of Yeats kept moving through me: "What made us dream that he could comb grey hair?" At the end of last week, at the memorial service at St. Thomas More, John's uncle Ted recalled that same line.

—PETE HAMILL

The actor

I WENT to college with the most famous teen-ager on earth. Brown University in the fall of 1979 was not unacquainted with celebrity. There was a Mondale there; one of Claus Von Bulow's stepchildren; Amy Carter came not long after. But my class's particular celebrity was of a different order altogether.

It was Freshman Week, and I was busy drinking so much that I was about to be reported to the dean's office for alcohol abuse. But even in my disagreeable state I was aware of the reports, and their furious pace. "Oh my God, you cannot believe how good-looking the guy is," said one. "He likes to be called John," said another. "He's in my history class." Celebrity aggrandizes the shallowest layer of narrative. Even so, I can tell you everything about my first sighting: It was in the dining hall. There was a commotion at a nearby table. A tall, perfectly handsome guy in jeans and a Hawaiian shirt; a smile like a million bucks. An elbow next to me lanced me in the ribs. "That's him, that's him."

I saw the most famous teen-ager on earth get seconds of pizza.

I spent most of freshman year in the West Quadrangle (a friend nicknamed it Gdansk, for its Eastern Bloc heartlessness), far from his more palatial dorm, with its high ceilings and large windows, and I saw little of him, just

the occasional glimpse. I suspected that the other Brown University, the one that featured mythic celebrities driving imported cars to off-campus apartments and swank restaurants, was a parallel realm, wholly inaccessible, without entrances and exits for hoi polloi like me. I had contempt for the residents of that celestial Brown. They always played Motown at parties, and always the same songs.

HERE the story would end, if not for the fact that I got interested in theatre at Brown. I decided to audition for a play that was gathering steam in late fall of junior year, "In the Boom Boom Room," by David Rabe. It had parts for a good-looking and somewhat dangerous leading man, his moll, and his drug-casualty sidekick. John, the President's son, who had a jones to act, it was said, auditioned for the lead. I auditioned for the sidekick. I remember reading with him. The details are hazy, but my sensation of incredible agitation is not—my voice locked in a hopeless struggle with vowels and consonants. I was in the presence of history. John was trapped in history's clutches; it was his constant companion, like a metaphysical Secret Service. And history had never before crossed my path. As it happened, we both got the parts.

As an actor, he had imbibed the Method without ever having set foot in the Actors Studio—a little Brando, a little De Niro, a healthy dollop of Nicholson, maybe a dash of his dad's inaugural pluck. I wasn't aware of his preparing his role in any way. I don't know if he learned his lines with the difficulty I did; like a lot of other things, it seemed easier for him. I don't remember that we ever did any improvising, or much at all in the way of acting exercises, except to dance wildly to "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'" and "Hang On Sloopy" in the empty rehearsal space. John showed up ready to act, and when the time came he delivered his lines with brio, with uncanny reserves of charisma. What's the surprise in this? He'd been acting his entire life. One performance after another; here a proscenium, here a plinth on which to stand for Camelot and its sorrows.

After a couple of weeks of rehearsals, John had taken to treating me

like his sidekick onstage, in a fashion that I found honorific and not at all beneath me. He started calling me by my character's name, Ralphie, whether we encountered one another on the green or at the movies, and he would occasionally invite me to have lunch with him—"Ralphie, what's up, my man?" A cup of coffee here and there. In the course of this, I got to know not John Kennedy, heir apparent, but

mother was unable to attend but Caroline, his sister, would represent the illustrious clan. That was plenty of geopolitical context for me, but I never mentioned my sense of proximal nervousness to John. I never said anything much to him at all, because the sidekick's job is to see and to observe, to be reliable and silent and faithful. So I was. On opening night, during the end of the first act, when we were both

among his inner circle, ran into him. "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise.../To scorn delights, and live laborious days," Milton says, lamenting a friend lost at sea—a much different idea of fame from ours now. Maybe it was John's idea—by studying acting, he was gaining another set of skills to pursue what he was going to pursue, in his laborious days. Yet we among the rubbernecks failed to see how much responsibility there was in such a life; we thought it was just playacting.

Soon we were ready to graduate. The Secret Service, who had never been much in evidence during John's education, fanned out across the grounds. Jackie arrived. My brother snapped her picture. She smiled. There were crowds. Providence sweltered. I had a wicked hangover. We'd loved, danced, been mummers on the stage of youth. Now we were a bunch of kids going on to other things. In this way, John Kennedy's public life commenced.

—RICK MOODY



this guy John, extremely winning, to be sure, but more like other people than other people suspected: not known to refuse a joint if it came around, liked rock and roll (turned it up), didn't always pay his parking tickets on time, had the occasional woman problem, a guy like any guy in Providence then.

As the performances approached, Santina Goodman, who directed the play, wanted John to cut off his hair. There was a lot of it, this hair, and it curled languorously and, I think, probably occasionally stopped traffic. So John showed up one night at rehearsal with a barbarous crewcut. It had a military severity. He was incredibly excited about it. "Ralphie," he said, "I went into a bar last night and no one knew who I was!" He said it the way you or I might speak of the lotto jackpot.

About the same time, John announced that his family was coming to opening night. As the evening in question approached, it turned out that his

backstage, in the stillness of waiting for glory, we heard a particularly robust laugh from the audience, singular and confident and warm. John leaned over and whispered, "That's my sister. That's Caroline."

On closing night, John had a cast party, at his place. It was down on Benefit Street, the restored nineteenth-century part of Providence, and his apartment was decorated—things matched, there were tasteful furnishings and appointments. Who could I bring to such a place? I was hanging out with people who drank too much and wore too much black eyeliner. There were large social issues implicit in his invitation. I was being plucked, for a moment, from oblivion, and my feelings were mixed.

I SAW him occasionally after that. I had been granted some minimal access, and I saw him for lunch once or twice, went to a couple of parties

A mother's influence

IN the end, however much he bore the imprint of his mother's moderating and cultured influence during her lifetime, John F. Kennedy, Jr., died like a Kennedy—the younger generation of Kennedys, that is, his life cut short in a violent and reckless manner. We will never know what precise combination of factors led the thirty-eight-year-old to make the fatal decision he did—to fly over water, in the hazy dark, with relatively limited experience, and without a co-pilot—but one can't help feeling that he reverted to the sort of testosterone-driven, virile thinking that marked his father's clan.

One also can't help feeling that this particular death might never have happened if Jackie had still been around to steer her son away from the daredevil legacy of his cousins. It speaks not only to the power that strong mothers wield but to the natural inclination of sons to resist that power. With his famously well-muscled physique and athletic prowess, John was hardly anyone's idea of a mama's boy; still, he does seem to have attended to his mother's wishes

and to have benefitted from her protective instincts. By all accounts, he was a genuinely unaffected and empathic young man, with a winning sense of irony. (When Barbara Walters asked him in an interview if he minded being called "the sexiest man alive" by *People*, he resisted the opportunity to puff himself up, dryly suggesting that there were worse things to be called.) But one wonders whether he didn't feel an unconscious need to prove himself. Living dangerously is a mama's boy's best revenge.

Those of us, especially women, who remember him as John-John, the floppy-haired and curious little boy, want to call out, *Stop. Don't go. Listen to your mother.* —DAPHNE MERKIN

Tribeca waits for normalcy

WHEN you're as famous as John F. Kennedy, Jr., everyone claims you as a neighbor. Having "grown up with him," even if it was only on tele-

him, in Tribeca, where he made his home for most of the last decade of his life, eventually buying a loft at 20 North Moore.

Tribeca offers its famous inhabitants anonymity (David Letterman, who also kept a loft there, was almost never seen on the street), but J.F.K., Jr., did not accept it; he was as visible a part of the neighborhood as almost anyone. You'd see him riding his bike to work with a big steel chain wrapped around his suit jacket, like an urban knight. He walked with his head down, but, wanting to be neighborly, he would often make contact by saying hi to people's dogs. Later, he got his own dog, Friday, and you'd always see him out on the street with it, sometimes carrying the dog on his shoulders.

Kennedy ate out a lot, often at Socrates, the Greek coffee shop at Hudson and Franklin that locals cherish as part of the unvarnished soul of old Tribeca. George Dourountous, the owner, said that Kennedy used to try

startling when you thought about all the reasons he had to be apprehensive of strangers. Don Schuck, a longtime Tribecan who lives a few doors down from No. 20, remembered how Kennedy used to stash an extra front-door key under his stoop, because he was always forgetting his keys.

Some residents worried that Kennedy's presence on North Moore would change the character of Tribeca. But he impressed them by helping to preserve the integrity of the place. When it was announced that developers were seeking permission from the Landmarks Preservation Commission to turn the old Atalanta warehouse, across the street from 20 North Moore, into a multiplex, Kennedy gave time and money to the neighborhood opposition, going before Community Board 1 to argue that a multiplex, with its lines of moviegoers from outside the neighborhood, teen-agers hanging around at all hours, noise, and traffic, was not in keeping with the character of the place that he and his neighbors thought of as home. The multiplex was never built.



vision, these pseudo-neighbors approached Kennedy wherever he went in the world with "Hey, John-John!" or "How's your wife?" or "When're you going to pass the bar?" It is therefore especially remarkable what a good neighbor Kennedy managed to be to the people who really did live around

out his rusty Greek on him. It was sort of amazing to walk by the coffee shop and see that face there, under the ratty picture of Socrates (the great philosopher looks like Hyman Roth in "The Godfather, Part II"), reading his *Post* and eating his eggs.

Kennedy's neighborliness was a little

NOW there is a shrine outside 20 North Moore, where long lines of J.F.K., Jr.'s pseudo-neighbors come to leave flowers, candles, and notes. Singers perform there during the day, dancers dance, and teen-agers hang around, drawn by a melodrama more compelling than anything at a multiplex, at least since "Titanic." (Even the name of a bar around the corner, "No Moore," seems to conspire in the melodrama.) A pseudo-neighbor, seeing a real neighbor go into No. 20, was heard to say, "Do people really live in that building? I thought it was just a shrine." The crowd has been growing larger every day. On Tuesday night, when Vice-President Al Gore was at a fund-raiser at the Tribeca Film Center, the word went around that he was planning to stop by the shrine afterward. At that point, one could foresee all the major candidates having to pay their respects to the unfinished metal doors and rat-infested garbage cans outside 20 North Moore. But Gore never showed, and the neighborhood breathed a sigh of relief.

—JOHN SEABROOK

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DOWN

- 1 WONDERFUL (anag.)
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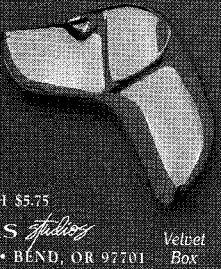
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ANNALS OF DIPLOMACY

THE VIRTUAL COMMANDER

How NATO invented a new kind of war.

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

SOON after the air war against Serbia began, on March 24, 1999, a NATO aircraft, probably an American F-15E Strike Eagle based in Aviano, Italy, came in high over the mountains above Pec, Kosovo's second city. Its target was a military-communications tower situated among a dozen Albanian houses laid out in an upland meadow above the city. Several miles from the tower, the "wizzo"—the weapons-system officer—released a laser-guided munition with a camera lens on its tip which homed in on the target. The strike severed the tower's metal frame from its concrete base. Now the mangled frame lies on its side across a water-filled bomb crater and about twenty-five feet from the homes of the Albanian families. What separates a successful strike from a catastrophe is small—even tiny—and illustrates the prodigious faith that these modern acts of war imply: faith in technological systems and in the pilots, three miles above the ground, who have to distinguish between a military and a civilian target separated by only a dirt track.

Ever since the moment during the Gulf War, eight years ago, when reporters saw cruise missiles "turning left at the traffic lights" to strike the bunkers of the Iraqi regime, the Western public has come to think of war as laser surgery. Displays of this kind of precision first inspired awe; now they are expected. We routinely demand perfection from the technology that surrounds us—from our cell phones, computers, and cars. Why not from war?

The task of managing this demand for perfection fell to General Wesley K. Clark, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, or SACEUR. He may have an imposing title, but he is a man with many masters: he answers to the nineteen nations that make up the NATO alliance, whose ambassadors sit on the North Atlantic Council, NATO's political decision-making body; to Javier Solana, the Spanish Secretary-General of NATO, who is responsible for keeping Clark's military operations under effective political control; and, finally, and most important, as the commander of EUCOM,

the American forces in Europe, Clark answers to the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and, ultimately, the President of the United States himself. The Americans supplied most of the intelligence, as well as between sixty-five and eighty per cent of the aircraft and precision ordnance for the initiative. The other NATO partners provided the rest of the aircrews and crucial political backing. Clark's job was to make coalition warfare work: to keep the lethal high-precision equipment supplied by the Americans from being rendered ineffective by the political and moral hesitations of nineteen allies running a war by committee. The war Clark found himself fighting wasn't exactly a war at all—it began without a formal declaration and it ended without complete victory—and it wasn't the one he would have fought had he been alone at the controls.

At various points in the campaign, a whisper would go out that Clark was doing a bad job: that he was "too political," "too technocratic," "too weak," "too intense." Perhaps he was simply too candid. After a press conference on April 27th, which resulted in reports that, despite a month of bombing, the Serbs were still reinforcing their troops in Kosovo, he was kept away from press briefings, on orders from the Pentagon: the Administration feared he was hinting too openly that combat troops were going to be needed if the air war failed. He didn't appear at another press conference until June 12th, to announce the entry of his troops into Kosovo. I met with him two weeks later, in his wood-paneled office at SHAPE—Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe—in Mons, Belgium. He is a small, lithe, thoughtful figure, and his voice, with its soft Arkansas drawl, has a disquieting element of gentleness. He gives the impression of holding strong emotions under strict but not always perfect control.

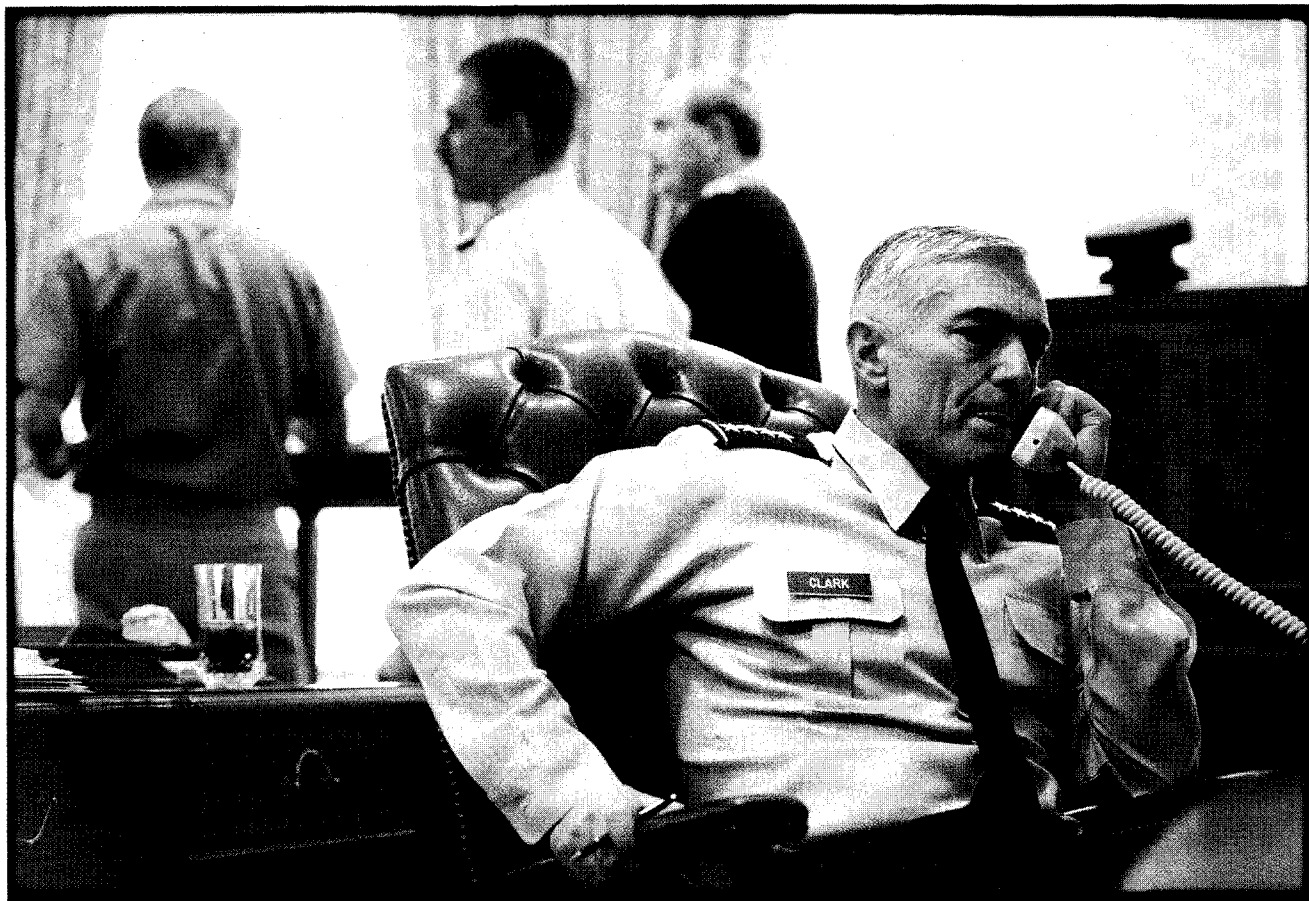
Clark himself had entered Kosovo the day before for the first time since the war began. As he walked through the streets of Pristina, the people he had liberated

were chanting his name and pounding him on the back. On television, the wiry gray-haired man, jostled and sometimes dwarfed by Albanians, seemed as exultant as a tightly wired four-star general is ever likely to look.

That first morning in Pristina was one to celebrate, but Clark wasn't celebrating yet. There was, for a start, a

accuracy, had worked. Milosevic's forces in the field—aggressive, unrepentant soldiers, in sunglasses and bandannas, making obscene gestures at the Western cameras as their columns withdrew northward—did not appear to have been defeated. It seemed strange that such a display of air power—more than thirty-six thousand sorties over seventy-eight

telling the truth. Members of Clark's staff will tell you that he did not conduct the war as a personal fight against Milosevic, but Clark's language in his briefings to the press—his choice of pronouns—tells a different story. It was not *their* air-defense system that was hit; it was *his* air-defense system, *his* tanks, *his* petroleum and oil storage depots.



Nineteen nations pressured General Wesley Clark to deliver a risk-free victory. Photograph by David Hume Kennerly.

Russian contingent that had beaten his troops to the Pristina airport. Clark was pretending publicly that it didn't matter much, when in reality he was seething. And then there was the war itself: it had ended not with unconditional surrender but with only a ceasefire. Slobodan Milosevic had withdrawn, but he still had the power to do harm. Serb troops had left, but the United Nations administration had not yet arrived. At checkpoints on the roads in Kosovo, Clark's troops were occasionally taking and returning fire. The Commander's mood was wary. "I'm very watchful," Clark told me, speaking softly. "There is no peace settlement. The ultimate division of political power has not been settled."

The larger question was whether the air campaign, for all the laser-guided

days—had not crushed them. But if Milosevic had not been defeated militarily why had he decided to withdraw? "You'd have to ask Milosevic, and he'll never tell you," Clark replied.

THE two men know each other about as well as enemies ever can. In 1995, Clark was the chief military liaison officer on the Holbrooke team that negotiated the Dayton accords ending the war in Bosnia. In 1998, it was Clark who delivered NATO's ultimatum to Milosevic that he stop his repression in Kosovo and allow the admission of foreign monitors or face an air campaign. Clark knows what brand of cigars the dictator smokes; he has sat through his jokes and his tirades; he knows when he is lying and when he is

From the beginning, Clark wanted to target Milosevic's bunkers, but NATO political leaders, for all their demonizing rhetoric, held back. It wasn't until the campaign was in its second month that Clark was given approval to bomb Milosevic's villa at Dobanovci—a Tito-era hunting preserve, about thirty minutes from the center of Belgrade, set among forests and fields along the edge of a lake. Back in September, 1995, in the run-up to the Dayton accords, Clark, Richard Holbrooke, and Milosevic took a walk in those woods together, and Milosevic reminisced about his trips to New York as a Yugoslav state banker in the early nineteen-eighties. "I want to smell that wonderful New York air again," he told his American guests. On the porch at Dobanovci at a subsequent

meeting, Milosevic suddenly suggested that the Americans might wish to meet Ratko Mladic, the commander of the Bosnian Serb forces, and Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader—Bosnia's most notorious war criminals. While his American guests looked at each other in astonishment, Milosevic announced that the two men were in a villa just two hundred yards away. Within minutes, they had sidled up onto the porch. After bitter late-night negotiations, during which Milosevic finally broke the resistance of his Bosnian Serb clients, Clark and Holbrooke got the Serbs to lift the three-year siege of Sarajevo.

Clark never forgot the incident, and the fact that there must have been some kind of guesthouse or bunker two hundred yards from Milosevic's front porch. Four years after the meeting in Dobanovci, with the air war under way, Clark asked for pictures of the area from an unmanned drone aircraft patrolling the skies above Belgrade. Then he and his targeters pored over the images, zeroing in on Dobanovci and identifying the spot where Mladic and Karadzic had been holed up. Milosevic himself might have gone to ground there. "Know what we did?" He raises his palm up, holds it there for a second, and slams it down hard on the coffee table. *Bam!* The notebooks on his staffers' knees jump. "We found it." A flicker of raw exultation crosses his face.

But if Clark knew his enemy so well, why did he anticipate him so poorly? Why did he never imagine that Milosevic might respond to the air war by expelling most of a nation?

ON March 24th, when the air campaign began, it was generally believed that a first wave of bombing would get Milosevic back to the negotiating table. And it was assumed that there would be a bombing pause after the first two days. Immediately, however, it became clear that "strategic bombing lite" would not work. In fact, Clark had wanted a different approach from the outset. He and his air commanders, led by General Michael Short, a blunt, outspoken veteran of two hundred and seventy-six combat missions in Vietnam, wanted to "go downtown" on the first night, hitting power, telephone, command-and-control sites, and Milosevic's bunkers. But NATO's political leaders wanted the strikes to be as light as possible. The politicians wouldn't approve strikes on occupied barracks, say, for fear of causing too many casualties among conscripts. "Basically, NATO's political sources were never happy with a phased air operation, because they wanted something more limited, more *diplomatique*," Clark told me, pronouncing the last word with a crisp, ironic edge.

NATO's initial self-confidence was misplaced. Pilots were encountering Serb

anti-aircraft and missile fire, and although they made it home, their aircraft were shuddering from the concussions of near misses. It was rumored that on the hillsides outside Aviano, Yugoslav amateur spotters, working with radio receivers, listened in to pilots on takeoff and then used cell phones to inform Belgrade of incoming strike patterns. The anti-aircraft fire wasn't especially accurate, but it succeeded in keeping NATO planes above fifteen thousand feet. Then an American Stealth F-117 went down, and though the pilot was rescued, the aura of NATO air invincibility was shattered. Nor was NATO disabling the Serbian air-defense system. United States radar-seeking missiles were unable to locate their targets, because the Serbs were not activating their radar long enough for the missiles to lock on to it.

At the end of March, with the politicians trying to control a campaign that was leading straight to failure, Clark obtained blanket approval from the North Atlantic Council, the supreme political body of the alliance, to go after a wider range of targets. At the same time, he called for reinforcements. The number of planes rose from four hundred to a thousand, provided by thirteen member countries. Phase Two of the campaign—a ramped-up series of strikes on strategic targets in Serbia and on Serbian forces in Kosovo—began on March 29th.

Clark, an Army man, could see the limitations of a war conducted exclusively from the air. He was aware that many experts thought he couldn't win without a ground war. But President Clinton had virtually ruled out ground options in the run-up to the congressional elections in 1998, at a time when he was fighting for his political life. For other NATO countries, too, among them Greece and Italy, a ground war was politically impossible. Indeed, the prospect of such a campaign was so controversial that Clark could not go to the North Atlantic Council for formal authorization to begin planning one. Essentially, Clark was forced to prepare for a possible ground operation in secret, even as he declared that no such operation was in the offing.

Clark still won't talk about these political constraints. On being asked whether the Allies should have positioned ground troops in Macedonia and Albania to put pressure on Milosevic, Clark parries the question with a smile, saying, "I don't know whether Milosevic would have



"Don't waste time on Daddy. Mummy's the money."

been impressed by the threat of ground troops. He obviously wasn't impressed by the threat of a NATO air operation." Clark's airmen were not happy about going it alone, either. Clark knew that taking out tanks and artillery only from the air broke with standard Air Force doctrine. "It was sort of an unnatural act for airmen to fight a ground war without a ground component," he says.

In early April, Clark deployed the five-thousand-man Task Force Hawk to Albania, with twenty-four Apache helicopters. As it turned out, the helicopter pilots didn't have sufficient hours of flying time to be combat ready, and two machines went down with the loss of two pilots. In any case, the Apaches were designed for combat support in a ground invasion, not solely as airborne attackers. Still, their mere presence in Albania kept Milosevic guessing. Clark's move was as much of a feint as anything else, being designed to tie down Serb forces near the Albanian border and convince Milosevic that a ground operation was imminent.

CLARK soon discovered that he had to improvise a much larger air campaign than he had ever intended. Initially, about a hundred sites had been identified as suitable targets. He needed to identify many more and have them approved, often by both NATO and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the Pentagon. And he needed them fast. The standard air-tasking order—assigning a pilot to a particular target—took seventy-two hours to clear all its hurdles, and this was too slow.

In response, Clark developed a new rapid-reaction targeting system. Because there were no NATO troops on the ground, there was no one to call in air strikes onto ground targets. The only troops capable of calling in fire were Kosovo Liberation Army units in the mountainous regions along the Albanian border. NATO did not want to be the K.L.A.'s air force, however, and denied them the communications equipment necessary for them to serve as forward air controllers for the planes overhead. Instead, Clark was forced to rely on *airborne* forward controllers, aloft in thirty-year-old Lockheed EC-130Es. Clark went to his Air Force commanders—including General Short, the air-campaign commander—but at first they didn't understand what he wanted. They told him, Give us the targets and we'll take them

out. He recalls replying, "You don't get it. You *develop* the targets." But we don't do that, his commanders replied. "So we had to fix that," Clark says tersely. He realized that they had to reduce the reaction times of the airborne controllers so that they could exploit targets of opportunity as soon as they appeared on their radar screens.

At SHAPE headquarters in Belgium, Clark's team improvised a comprehensive target-development-and-review process. The computerized system, which operated in real time, pulled together American and NATO intelligence officers, the force commanders in Italy, Macedonia, and Albania, and Clark's battle planners and targeters at SHAPE. No such system had existed at the beginning of the war, and it wasn't fully operational until late April. But, once it was running, it finally gave Clark control of his air war.

Every morning, planners at American bases in Italy, Germany, Belgium, and the United States logged on to the SIPERNET, the United States military's secure digitized computer network, and began putting together target folders—slides with aerial-reconnaissance pictures of a target, assessments of its military significance, and gradings of possible collateral damage. Data specialists at EUCOM's Joint Analysis Center, in Molesworth, England, fed into the system targets that had been picked up by Predator and Hunter unmanned drone aircraft, which were now being used for the first time to photograph targets from the air. Weapons experts at the Combined Air Operations Center, in Vicenza, Italy—an agglomeration of windowless prefabs and the operational center for the air war—would then select the most appropriate ordnance types, and Clark's targeters at SHAPE would evaluate the designated mean point of impact, or DMPI ("dimpy"), and the risk of collateral damage.

The computerized operation also took account of legal and moral evaluation of the target. At a base in Germany, a military lawyer from the Judge Advocate General's office, sitting at his computer screen, would assess the target in terms of the Geneva conventions governing the laws of war. He would rule whether it was a justifiable military objective, and whether its value outweighed the potential costs in collateral damage. A military lawyer also applied "the reasonable-person standard" to the fine line

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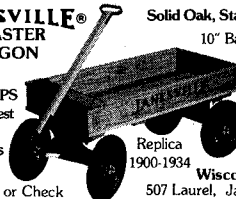
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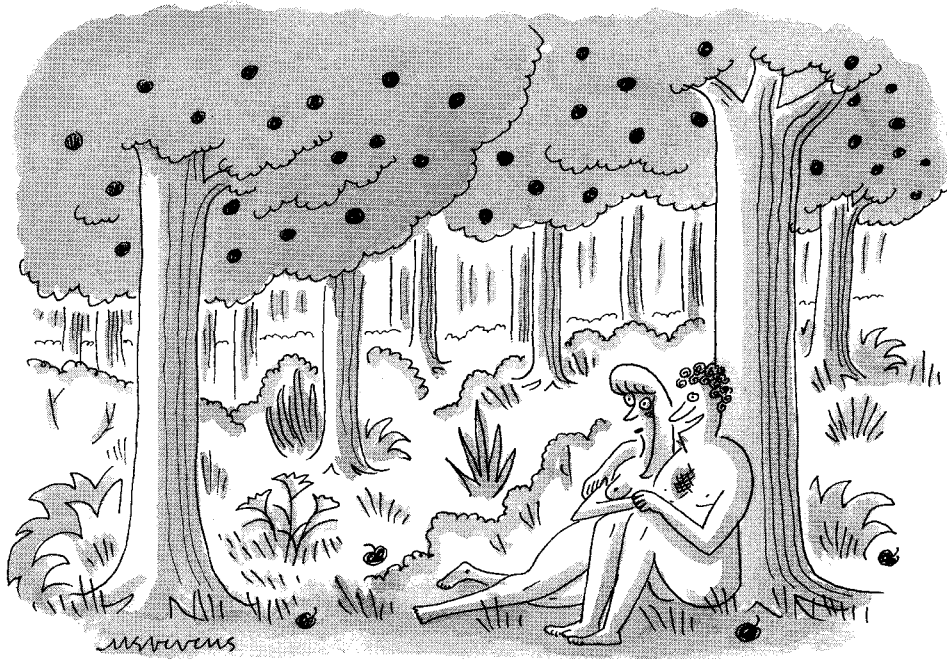
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"I can't help thinking there's a book in this."

separating military and civilian targets.

Clark's main contact with the war, apart from flying visits to the pilots at Aviano and the troops in Macedonia and Albania, was virtual rather than visceral. The two fixed points of his war were VTCs—video teleconference meetings—one with NATO and one with EUCOM, every morning, in secure briefing rooms at SHAPE headquarters.

At 9 A.M., Clark would conduct a VTC with the NATO force leaders. They would review the results of the previous day's bombings and go over timelines for the coming day. At these NATO meetings, intelligence officers and targeters would flash targeting slides up on the screen and discuss them. Any NATO country that had pilots or planes in the air over a proposed target had to give approval, and Clark often had to call Paris or Bonn to get European politicians or chiefs of staff to agree to a particular strike. As one officer who sat in on the meetings said, they involved agonizing horse-trading: when Clark found himself blocked politically, he would ring up Javier Solana, the NATO Secretary-General, and say, for instance, "You've got to help me with target 183. I need 183," and Solana would go to work on the member state that was objecting. After the NATO teleconference, Clark would go to another briefing room for a VTC with EUCOM. All operations using sensitive American assets—such as

planes with stealth technology or cruise missiles—were managed not through the NATO chain of command but through EUCOM. At this meeting, Clark would sign off on targets and pass them on to the Joint Chiefs, in Washington, who would send particularly sensitive targets to the White House for clearance.

Clark kept the coalition from paralyzing the air war by keeping NATO out of missions using American planes. At Vincenzo, there were two completely separate targeting teams, called cells—one for NATO warplanes and the other for EUCOM assets. America was parsimonious in sharing intelligence and targeting information with its allies. Even the British government, which was America's closest ally, was not always informed of American strike targets and intentions. The United States Air Force kept its key strike aircraft, the B-2 bomber, at the Whiteman Air Force Base, in Missouri, so that its own allies would not have access to its advanced and highly secret stealth technology.

Because of the political and legal constraints, the pilots' rules of engagement were strict, "as strict as I have seen in my twenty-seven years," in the opinion of General Chuck Wald, who helped coordinate the approval of targets by the Joint Chiefs. They could fire only on visual recognition of a target—which meant that bad weather forced many sortie can-

cellations—and often, when they saw potential targets, they had to radio in to the air-war headquarters for a final approval.

In mid-May, General Short told the *Times* that if his pilots weren't sure of a target they would call him directly: "Boss, I see a village and I see tanks parked next to the houses in the village. What do you want me to do? And I'll say 'Tell them to hit the tanks.' And if he hits a house by mistake, that's my responsibility." Even so, with all the controls in place, with all the precision weaponry, the final decisions were up to young pilots searching for the DMPI through two four-inch-square target monitors. They made judgments that they will live with for the rest of their lives: believing that the trucks on the road to Djakovica on April 14th were a military convoy and discovering too late that they seemed to be tractorloads of refugees; pressing the trigger to

blow up a bridge and discovering at the last second that a train was crossing it.

The computerized target system was pulling all Clark's intelligence assets together, but it had one blindingly obvious failing. As Clark called for more and more targets, and these, now numbering a thousand, were turned into target folders, nobody thought to question the accuracy of target designation. That was essentially how Clark's worst moment of the war came about: the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy, on May 7th. "That was a real stunner," he says quietly. The C.I.A.'s maps were years out of date. Mid-level C.I.A. analysts who warned that the target had been misidentified couldn't get their message in to the targeting process in time. Appalled at the diplomatic consequences, which seemed to sink any chance of Chinese approval of a U.N. resolution to end the conflict, the NATO ambassadors and heads of government told Clark to recheck every target identification and err on the side of caution. There was no recurrence, but the myth of error-free war had been destroyed for good.

POLITICAL micromanagement continued throughout the campaign. After the war was over, President Chirac, of France, boasted to a French reporter that if there were bridges still standing in Belgrade it was because of him. Tony

Blair came to Clark's office in mid-April and told him that the future of every leader in Europe depended on the outcome. "Are you in this to win?" Blair asked him. Clark said he was.

Containing and deflecting these political pressures was the essence of Clark's war. While his commanders were bridleing at what they saw as interference, Clark tried to finesse and soothe the anxieties of his political masters while keeping them from running the campaign. His political instincts told him he had to keep aircrew losses to a minimum—"I never expected to get zero," he told me—because headlines regularly announcing yet another downed plane would have brought the campaign to a close within days. But progress on the targets was agonizingly slow, and Clark knew he had to deliver. By early May, hawks in the editorial columns were questioning Clark's supposed decision to keep the pilots above fifteen thousand feet. In reality, pilots frequently flew below the fifteen-thousand-foot ceiling but soon discovered that, in Clark's words, "flying low doesn't pay." Pilots breaking out below cloud formations in mountainous terrain at five hundred knots could focus only on staying airborne. And the simple reality was that, high or low, the pilots were having little impact on the ethnic cleansing. The United States Air Force Brigadier General Daniel Leaf, experiencing his first combat missions under fire in his F-16, could see it happening below. "I could actually see them burning houses. It was extraordinary and horrifying."

Clark's fliers were frustrated by their inability to hit Serb forces. The Serbs proved to be expert at camouflage, deception, and the use of decoys. They built fake bridges and applied camouflage paint to real ones. They constructed dummy artillery pieces out of painted telephone poles and wagon wheels. Pilots would strike what they thought was a tank and watch it deflate like a pricked balloon. Clark was visibly nettled during one press conference when Martin Walker, a correspondent for the *Guardian*, asked him why NATO was using million-dollar weapons to take out ten-thousand-dollar targets. But that was exactly what was happening: high-cost precision ordnance was being thrown at aging Soviet artillery and tanks, and, more often than not, was failing to take them out.

The hard fact is that the mightiest Air Forces in the world were unable to destroy Milosevic's army in the field. Clark himself maintains that his airmen took out a hundred and ten tanks, two hundred and ten armored fighting vehicles, and four hundred and forty-nine artillery and mortar tubes. But the numbers themselves don't prove much. General Leaf argued fiercely on the phone from his base, in Aviano, that "counting tanks is irrelevant," and he went on to say, "The fact is they withdrew, and while they took tanks with them, they returned to a country whose military infrastructure has been ruined. They're not going to be doing anything with those forces for a long time." The key impact of the air campaign was in driving the Serbs into dugouts, bunkers, and revetments to escape the B-52s overhead.

By late May, both Clark and NATO's political leaders were desperate for results. A string of dreadful accidents was draining away public support for the air war. Opinion polls were shifting alarmingly. The campaign's mistakes, although rare, were consuming its own legitimacy, and there were perhaps only ten days of viable, i.e. politically acceptable, targets left.

At this point, Clark finally secured approval for the key strike of the war. At the beginning of May, Clark's aircraft had hit the transformer yards of the Yugoslav power grid with graphite bombs. They were "clean" strikes, causing the transformer yards to short out rather than disabling the generators themselves. Lights in major cities went out for up to twenty-four hours before the Serbs got the system back on line. The yards were hit with the graphite bombs again, and again the system went down temporarily. Finally, on May 24th, heavier munitions took the grid out completely. Bombing those transformer yards turned out to be the single most effective military strike of the campaign. Everything from the computers that run a country's banking system to the systems that operate air-defense radar sta-

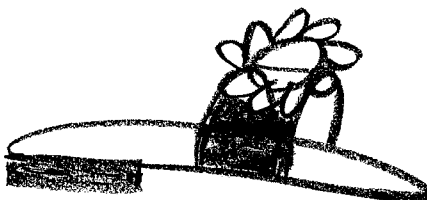
tions depends on the grid. Hitting it also sent a powerful message to the civilian population. Until the grid was struck, as Clark put it, "this was the only air campaign in history in which lovers strolled down riverbanks in the gathering twilight and ate at outdoor cafés and watched the fireworks." After the grid was destroyed, both the political elite and the civilian population knew that NATO had secured control of the regime's central nervous system.

The irony here was obvious: the most effective strike of the war was also the most morally problematic. Hitting the grid meant taking out the power for hospitals, babies' incubators, water-pumping stations. The military lawyers made this clear to Clark. One of them recalls, "We'd have preferred not to have to take on these targets. But this was the Commander's call." Once the power went off in Belgrade, Milosevic's command and control structures were disrupted, and civilian support began to ebb.

After all the political bickering over target selection, the Air Forces of the NATO countries bombing Serbia actually made coalition warfare work. Leaf recalls leading his F-16 into a night attack on a Belgrade-area petroleum storage depot. "I had Germans firing anti-radiation missiles over my shoulder," he told me. "I had Dutch pilots flying air suppression. I had Italian Tornados firing anti-radar missiles." All of the pilots were wearing night-vision goggles; all of them were observing total radio silence; and all of them returned to base with their missions accomplished.

Night-vision goggles—in use by NATO pilots for only the last eighteen months or so—were perhaps the key innovation of the war. The goggles look like opera glasses and are attached by a clip to a pilot's helmet. He flips them down, like a baseball outfielder flipping down his shades to make a catch in the sun. The effect, the pilots say, is startling. Look out of the cockpit at night without the glasses and all you see is blackness. Flip down the glasses and you see an F-16 on your wingtip. They gave NATO ownership of the night.

DEVASTATING as the execution of the air campaign proved to be, particularly against Serbia's civilian infrastructure, it might have turned out very differently if the Russians had given the Serbs their latest technology.



The air war was essentially a duel between seventies Soviet air-defense technology and state-of-the-art American precision-guidance systems. If NATO had been up against eighties Soviet technology, it might have lost twenty planes, and it is unclear whether NATO electorates would have stood for such losses. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott has confirmed that the United States "repeatedly and explicitly" warned Russia not to provide Yugoslavia with "any military assistance—matériel, know-how, personnel." As he put it, "We didn't mince words." Any Russian assistance that increased the risk to United States pilots would have had a "devastating" effect on the future of United States-Russian relations.

Diplomacy, in other words, was just as important in changing Milosevic's mind as the air war was. Milosevic had gambled that NATO would not hold together if it were faced with the aroused opposition of the Russians and their overt military assistance to Serbia. Russia could have split NATO in two, but for all their talk of Slavic brotherhood, the Russians decided that their national interest ultimately lay with America, not with a Balkan dictator.

It was the Russians who told Milosevic that the game was up. And herein lies a major irony. If Russia had been what Western policymakers had wanted it to be, which is to say a functioning pluralist democracy, there is little doubt that it would not have behaved as the West wanted it to behave. A democratic Russia would have actively supported the Serbs. Yeltsin, the autocrat, was able to ignore popular feeling in favor of Serbia and instruct his special envoy, Viktor Chernomyrdin, to abandon the Milosevic regime. That he did so, senior American officials believe, is due to the channel of communication between Vice-President Gore and Chernomyrdin, established when the latter was Prime Minister of Russia. Gore apparently warned Chernomyrdin of what Allied intelligence already knew about Milosevic's war crimes inside Kosovo, and confronted the Russians with an uncomfortable issue: whether they wanted to associate themselves with massacre. The diplomatic encirclement of the Milosevic regime was complete. At the last moment, military force and diplomatic leverage came together. Clark was the architect of the air war,

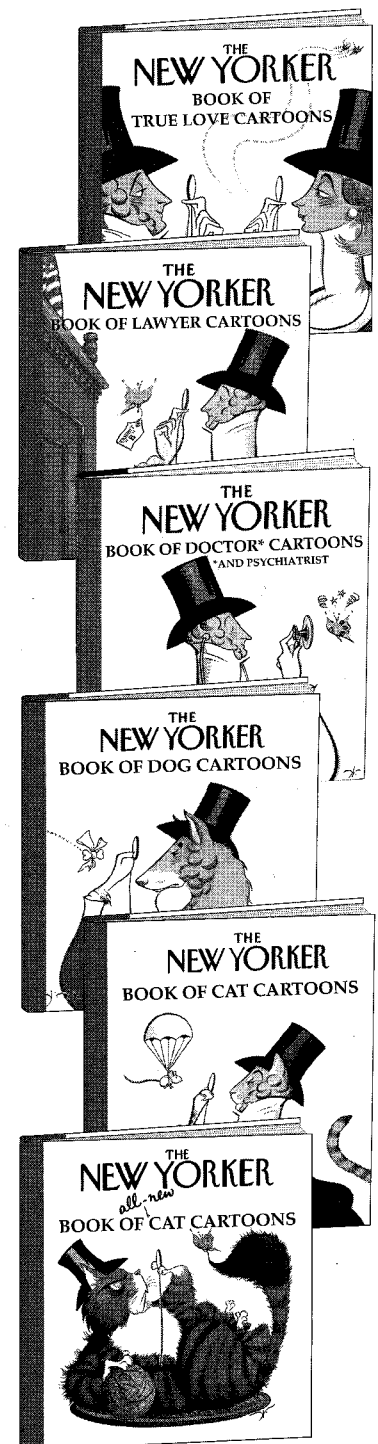
not of the diplomacy that brought it to an end. Yet he never lost sight of the curious fact that his war was not a war at all, but an exercise in coercive diplomacy designed to change one man's mind.

NOW that the planes are back in their hangars, what is striking is the disconnection between the high moral language of the cause and the essentially limited character of the war itself. The political leaders of NATO spoke the language of ultimate commitment and practiced the warfare of minimum risk. As commander, Clark was placed in an often impossible position: being asked to wage a war that was clean yet lethal, just yet effective, moral yet ruthless. The paradox is that greater ruthlessness—going downtown on the first night and taking out the grid—might have been more effective, and, in the end, more merciful. But a generation of political leaders raised on the slogan "Give peace a chance" proved hesitant to give war a chance.

Clausewitz would have called Kosovo a cabinet war. Unlike the Gulf War, the Kosovo war did not mobilize hundreds of thousands of men. It mobilized opinion around the world, but it was fought by no more than fifteen hundred NATO airmen and the élite Serbian air-defense specialists, probably numbering in the hundreds. It did not end in unconditional surrender, the fall of a regime, or anything that could be called definitive. It produced "an end state," still open to final definition. It was a virtual war, fought in video-conference rooms, using target folders flashed on screens, and all that Clark ever saw of the rush of battle was the gun-camera footage sent every night on secure Internet systems to his headquarters in Belgium. Cabinet wars are fought and won by technicians, and Clark's team gave a virtuoso display of technical improvisation. Cabinet wars do not end with parades, garlands, and civic receptions, or with sorrowful ceremonies at graveyards. For cabinet wars never reach deep into the psyche of a people; they do not demand blood and sacrifice, and they do not reward their heroes. The campaign took its cool, enclosed, and disciplined commander to his outer limits, in terms of stamina, political acumen, will power, and leadership. But there will be no ticker-tape parade for General Wesley Clark. It was not that kind of war. ♦

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STANLEY KUBRICK WAS MY FRIEND, TOO

BY ALEX ROSS

A FEW years ago, at about two in the morning, the phone rang, and a voice said, "Will you accept a collect call from Stanley Kubrick?" Stanley always was a cheap bastard. "No," I said, irritated by the lateness of the call. I soon regretted my refusal, however, and I dialled *69. I found myself on the line with the auteur of "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "Full Metal Jacket." We often laughed afterward at the fact that I had penetrated the defenses of so famously reclusive a man with so simple a device as *69. It was a loophole that his security specialists had somehow overlooked. The problem was quickly addressed, and the next person who tried to *69 him was electrocuted.

Stanley and I talked for thirty-six hours. We touched on every subject under the sun: St. Thomas Aquinas, suspension bridges, Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis," chicken farming, "The Dukes of Hazzard." Stanley was a big fan of "The Dukes of Hazzard," it turned out, and he had seen a "Where Are They Now?" article I had written about the show for *TV Guide*. He wanted to know what I thought of John Schneider, who had portrayed Bo Duke. "I'm thinking of making a movie about Hitler," Stanley told me, "and I think Bo Duke might be perfect for it."

"The role of Hitler?" I asked, dubiously.

"No-no-no," he said, with that quick asperity he reserved for those slightly less brilliant than himself. "The role of Soldier No. 112, in the Battle of the Bulge."

"Is it a speaking role?" I asked.

"Of course not. He will be mostly hidden behind a snow-bank," Stanley replied. I said I thought that John Schneider would be perfect for the role, and I soon found myself on a plane to London.

When I arrived at Stanley's mansion, a delightful dinner party was in progress. Stanley

was thought to be a recluse, but he often had delightful dinner parties. Present at this one, if I remember rightly, were John Le Carré, Terrence Malick, J. D. Salinger, Kay Thompson, Syd Barrett, Doris Duke, Martin Bormann, and that man who jumped out of an airplane with lots of money in the seventies. Everyone had a wonderful time, and Stanley was at the center of it all. Stanley was widely considered a cold, geometrical tyrant of the cinema, but he was really a "people person," and he nearly gave Doris Duke a seizure by slapping her heartily on the back. He told stories, cracked jokes, did card tricks, and, at one point, got up on the table and sang "Puff, the Magic Dragon" and "We Shall Overcome." When I went upstairs to bed, he was still carrying on, trying to organize a midnight game of Kick the Can.

Stanley gave me some books to read on the way home: Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Der Turm"; the Earl of Stanhope's four-volume biography of William Pitt the Younger; J. T. Scharf's "History of

Maryland, from the Earliest Period to the Present Day"; "Eye on Cavett," by Dick Cavett; "Heather Has Two Mom-mies"; and John Grisham's "The Firm."

"There's a movie in one of these books," Stanley said to me.

"Which one?" I asked.

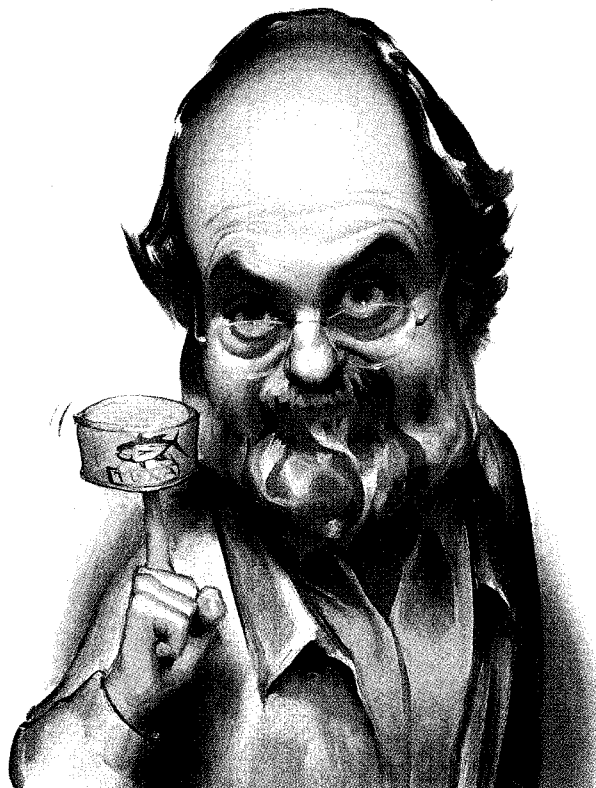
"I dunno. It's not like I'm some all-seeing, all-knowing, cold, geometrical tyrant of the cinema," Stanley shot back, with a knowing, ironical laugh. He paused, with the expert comic timing of a New York Jew, and then he said, "Did you realize that you left a can of tuna fish on your kitchen counter?" When I got home, I made an eerie discovery: there was indeed a can of tuna fish on my kitchen counter. I read all the books and called Stanley back. "I liked 'The Firm,'" I said, "but I think they already made a movie out of it."

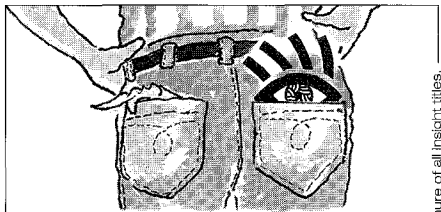
"I-know-I-know-I-know," he said. "But I could do a better job. I will film it with Imax cameras in natural light."

I moved to London to begin work on the script for "Stanley Kubrick's John Grisham's The Firm," as we had to call it for legal reasons. Stanley always had trouble with actors, and he had the idea of casting this film entirely with his favorite cats and dogs. I struggled mightily with the limitations that this plan placed on my style, and the project gradually ran out of steam. Still, I

treasure the memory of my collaboration with Stanley, especially the lighter moments: the time we recited π to ten thousand places, for example. The matter of compensation, however, always caused me and my agent some distress. It turned out that in the end I was paying Stanley, at a rate of three dollars an hour. I protested to Stanley, and he said, "That's below minimum wage." So I paid him more.

The day Stanley died, my doorman said to me, "You know, a funny thing about that director who died today. A couple of years ago, I got a call from someone claiming to be him, saying he'd pay me a thousand dollars if I went and put a can of tuna fish on your kitchen counter. Of course, I did it. Never did get the money. Cheap bastard. But a genius." Amen. ♦





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PERSONAL HISTORY

LAST JOKES

The author recalls the events leading up to the death of Iris Murdoch.

BY JOHN BAYLEY

In July of last year, this magazine published "Elegy for Iris," an account by John Bayley of his marriage to the British novelist Iris Murdoch. In that memoir, Bayley recalled his courtship of Murdoch at Oxford in the fifties, when he was a struggling English-literature scholar and she was a dazzling young philosopher; their adventurous marriage; and the ways in which their life together changed when, in 1995, Murdoch was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Iris Murdoch died this past February.

DECEMBER, 1997: Iris's sleep is doubly precious now, relieving her of the sightless and timeless troubles that perplex her days. Things have been getting steadily worse, particularly if we have to do a long drive. As the miles go on, she becomes more and more agitated and restless, clamoring beside me in the car like a demented cockatoo. Stopping from time to time does not help, and I try never to undertake such journeys, on whatever pretext. Our car has no childproof locks, and I am terrified that at the height of one of these manic fits she will get the door open and jump out into the road.

But there was no escaping a recent journey to the village of Litton Cheney, on the coast of Dorset, to attend a funeral service for a friend of ours, the photographer Janet Stone. During Janet's slow decline, we had become much attached, and we had tried to see her as often as we could. She was concerned about Iris, trying to teach her the simpler methods of embroidery, though it was no use. Janet herself had never got over the sudden death of her husband, Reynolds. She had tried to make a new life for herself, but she had missed him and their life together too much for recovery.

The nightmarish three-hour drive from Oxford had worn me out and

made it impossible to think about the funeral, at which I had been asked by Janet's children to say a few words. Never an easy assignment, this was likely to be an impossible one. Oppressed by our own troubles, I could think of nothing to say. Perhaps something would come to me at the last moment, in the church in Litton Cheney.

Iris, beside me in the car, babbled and gestured unceasingly, her anxieties rising to a pitch in a weird, shrill cry I had never heard before. A word or two came through. "Wrong! Driving! Not way! Not mother, not house... mother house!"

On the bypass just beyond Dorchester, my own agitated attention flickered between the road ahead and Iris's hands—none too clean, as usual, which was my fault—scrabbling near the door handle. If only we could have gone to the funeral by train. But Iris could be as bad on a bus or a train as in the car, to the consternation of her fellow-passengers.

It was a deep relief to turn off the main road at last and dip down the lane toward the village. A sea fog was rolling up over the churchyard. Snowdrops, Janet's favorite flower, were strewn around Reynolds's grave; beside it was Janet's grave, newly dug. I thought of Reynolds's endearing way of talking to Iris—talking as if to himself but with his bright eyes fixed on hers, their affectionate gaze seeming to make speech unnecessary.

I silently invoked his aid as we walked past the grave to the west door of the church. Reynolds had loved taking Iris to the sea, on the long sweep of the Chesil Bank below us. He helped her to find stones. In summer, the three of us bathed together, and once Iris had nearly drowned, while Reynolds and I placidly dried ourselves. There was always a slow surge on the steep bank of shingle. Iris happened to mis-

judge it, and she was pulled beneath by the slight undertow. She didn't panic, and the next wave brought her in. Reynolds and I, calmly chatting, noticed nothing, nor did she say anything to us, although in bed that night she told me what had happened. She used her memory of the incident in one of her novels, "The Nice and the Good."

The church was full of the pure, cold scent of snowdrops, massed in jars around the altar and the pulpit. The sea fog had cleared now, and through the west window I could make out the line of the bay. Could I get by if I were just to give a little commentary on these things, like a radio reporter at a sports event? Sea and snowdrops, and some past events? Placid chats in the hot sun on the Chesil Bank, near-drownings? I glanced for inspiration at Iris, who was between Janet's two daughters, Emma and Phillida, in the front row. She sat like a prisoner under escort and was staring down at the marble floor. It was thick with worn old inscriptions—records of parsons and gentry long departed. My eyes followed hers in a bemused way. What *was* I to say when the moment came?

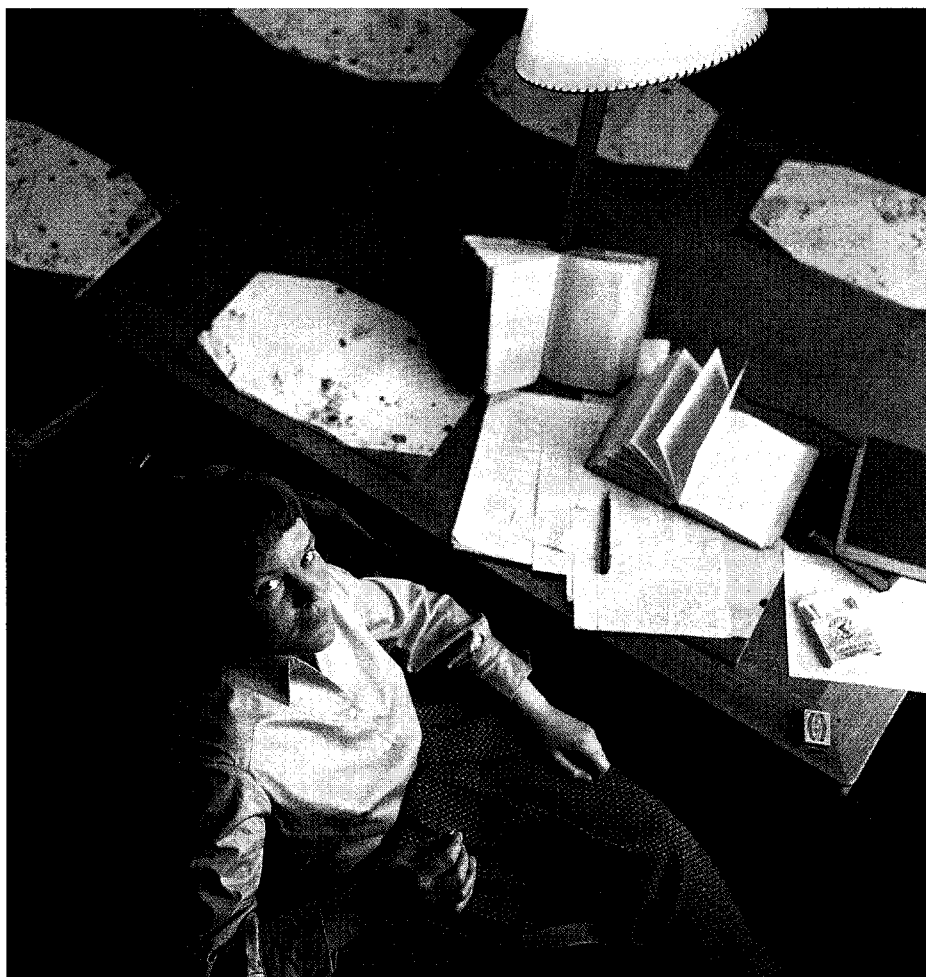
I got out of the pew at the right time and took up a position on the chancel steps. I opened my mouth. The small congregation looked expectant, but also, I thought, a little nervous. They were acting their part, as I would have to act mine. Only Iris, lost now in her own darkness, seemed to have no role to play. There came into my head a line from Auden. He remarks on the difference "between the sane who know they are acting and the mad who do not." Did Iris know the difference? I was sure she didn't as she sat there, staring uncalmly at the floor.

I was able to speak at last, thank goodness. I found myself saying that I missed Janet very much, because I liked to tell her about funny things that had happened—things, I was about to say, that I could no longer tell to Iris, but I stopped myself just in time. Unnerved by this narrow escape, I found that I had dried up completely. What else was there to say? I had to give an example. Things that Janet had

liked hearing about. My mind was a blank, but the mourners in front of me were still nobly acting their part and I had to go on acting mine. Starting with a jerk, I found, to my horror, that I was telling them the story about Audi and the bath.

Audi Villers, an old friend, had been staying with us recently, just for the

It was too late for my realization that the funeral audience had not found the story of Audi and the bath comic at all. Perhaps it wasn't. Uncertainly, I got out once more how sorry I was that I would never see Janet again and so would be unable to tell her the story. Some faces—those of Emma and Phillida—did look touched and tearful.



Murdoch in 1959: "In losing her own life, Iris had given me a new one."

night. Soon after she arrived, I found her cleaning the bath. "Audi," I said, "please don't bother. There's no need." Audi looked surprised by my words, and also amused. "Oh, yes there is," she said. "I want to take a bath." Sound logic. But why should it have struck me at the time as so funny? Anyway, it did, and we had both burst out laughing. The congregation looked bewildered. What had this domestic event to do with their departed friend Janet? I hastened to explain that since Janet had loved comic things and happenings, I had been looking forward to telling her this one. Now, alas, I should not be able to.

Greatly encouraged, I had a sudden brain wave—a recollection of the moment toward the end of Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" when the heroine, on her way to the station to throw herself under a train, sees a shop sign that strikes her as comical. She thinks that she will tell her lover, Vronsky, about it—it will be something to amuse him. Then she remembers that she will not be seeing Vronsky again, not ever. Tolstoy implies that if anything could have deterred Anna from suicide it would have been her realization of that moment: the joke and the pleasure of telling it to the man she loves, the awareness that their love is over,

and that life will soon be over, too.

With the madness of those whom the gods wish to destroy, I babbled on. How very apt it was, and how wonderful and touching was Tolstoy's art! By the time I finished, the congregation was looking not only bemused but downright uncomfortable. I still go hot and cold when I think of that moment. How could I have supposed that Anna's suicide would be a suitable topic for a few words at a friend's funeral?

THE business was over at last, and we were on our way home. Even before we started out, Iris had become difficult. The kind Stone daughters had done their best to soothe her, but her behavior—normally so subdued in public, and smiling, as if she were anxious to show that an Alzheimer's sufferer could nonetheless play the part sweetly—had become rude and wild. Like a bad child, she wanted to leave; and amidst the decorum of the funeral gathering, the sherry glasses and the teacups, she had made her wishes all too clear.

As I got her away, feeling by that time fairly wild myself, I reflected on the fallacy of Auden's smart epigram: it is the mad, not the sane, who behave as if they know they are acting, but their parts get mixed up. However strange—"naturally" strange, as it were—Iris may

have become in private, carrying odd things about and babbling away to herself downstairs at two in the morning, she had managed to preserve up to then the public part of a deranged person who was doing her best to conceal and apologize for what was wrong. The funeral, I saw, had seriously upset her. Overexcited her, too. That was why she had become the impossible child, seeming to throw herself into the part with diabolical energy.

Loneliness, as I drove and tried to quiet Iris, seemed overwhelming. I felt that I longed for death, like Anna Karenina, abandoned, as she knew, by a lover who had become a stranger to her. The person beside me seemed a stranger, too. I had never regarded suicide as one of Iris's options. I thought of Belial, that unheroic devil in "Paradise Lost." He despised his fellow-devils' heroic desire to immolate themselves in a battle to regain Heaven. He was for life, at any price. He knew that as things get worse, the life of the mind can seem more and more worth having. And yet I did have frequent thoughts of doing ourselves in together, if there were a nice, safe, reliable way.

Then I saw the house. The little villages hereabouts, which were built of gray stone from Portland, nestled in their valleys as naturally as sheep in a field. This house was unexpected and

nightmarish. It stood on a hill, proclaiming itself, built in the redbrick style of the thirties. A long drive lined with little conifers led up to the house from the main road, where a fancy oaken gate was open. It was an odious house. And at that moment what seemed to come out of it was like a hateful dream. My need for it was hateful, too. The absurd nightmare that I started to tell myself was like a revenge engendered by the demons of solitude—a revenge taken on the mad stranger screaming and protesting beside me.

Years ago, when I had fallen in love with Iris, she told me of a strange and wonderful man, the distinguished author Elias Canetti, with whom she had been—and still was—in love. When he learned about my existence from some third party, he forbade her to see me. She ignored him. Still, I was terrified that Canetti would carry her off, like Pluto, into his own dark underworld. In time, Iris had escaped—fortunately, for me.

Now, in my dream, we were driving past the gates, up to the house on the hill. The woman beside me was indeed my wife, but her name was Priscilla. She was a tiresome girl, with whom I was on bad terms. She was hissing something at me: "Why on earth did you do that? You can't just drive up to a private house."

I ignored the hissing of Priscilla because I had seen something in the rear-view mirror: a man had stepped out onto the drive behind us. He had a scythe over his shoulder, and as I watched him he put the scythe down across the driveway, as if to prevent us from turning back.

I stopped the car, and Priscilla jumped out. She shimmied up to the strange man, all apologies and London charm. She talked to him, smiled at him. He had a massive face and head, thick black hair. He was squat and sinister. Where had I seen that man? Of course! He was Dr. Canetti. But why, of all people, was he here? I thought, No wonder Priscilla seems to be so taken with him—he is a truly fascinating man. Slowly, I got out of the car. Canetti smiled. His smile was that of a crocodile. We were invited into the house. Inside, sitting vaguely behind a tea table in the drawing room, was such



"Remember to round off each billable hour to the nearest week."

a nice-looking woman—tall, willowy, angular, faded, middle-aged. I felt drawn to her immediately.

I thought, If only I could leave Priscilla with Canetti and go off with that woman! Away and away! I turned politely toward our host—the massive, squat, saturnine man—and he bowed and smiled his crocodile smile at me. He knew what I wanted to do. And he wanted me to do it. He always got what he wanted. He was the primal power figure—Iris's onetime lover, tyrant, dominator, and master. Teacher, too, and inspiration. The great, all-knowing *Dichter*. And now he wanted to take Priscilla for himself and give Iris to me. The sweet-looking woman sitting vaguely on the sofa.

Why was he doing this? Of course, I knew why: because his wife, Iris, who had for so long been his captive, had now, for that reason, begun to go mad. But he did not tell me that, of course. I learned of her madness too late. And Iris has now been taken into the domain of that other Dark Lord—Dr. Alzheimer.

HUMOR, normality, love: quite suddenly, they seemed to come flooding back from beside me, for Iris had gone quiet, and I could feel her relax. I reached out a hand, and hers found it and held it. I felt we could now drive on tranquilly, for we were on that lonely stretch of high Roman road that runs between Collingbourne Ducis and Wexcombe. A beautiful stretch in summer, when we had always stopped on our drives north and south to wander about for a few moments, contemplate the lofty upland, the clouds over Inkpen, and sometimes the insect dots hovering there, which are hang gliders, soaring and sailing among the huge curves that run down to the plain—the Great Plain, as Hardy called it.

Thinking of Anna Karenina's last joke, never uttered, I remembered a woman I once knew whose husband had had Alzheimer's. "Like being chained to a corpse, you know," she'd remarked to me, with a cheerful laugh. Since Iris's own affliction had just begun to be severe, I'd seen what the woman meant. But, no, it had not been true. Not true for me then. Or for Iris.

I pulled off the road, stopped the car, and put my arms around her. A few miles back, I had felt afraid to be alone with her for the first time since we'd met, nearly fifty years ago. I had found myself with a madwoman, one quite alien and strange. All that was gone now. She was just Iris—Iris as I had always known her, and loved her.

It was true that we were in darkness, but it was a darkness without fear or hope, a darkness in which we were now travelling together again as one. And we could go on together somehow, from day to day, from tea to supper, and from supper to bedtime. So long as we went on like that, there would be nothing to care about, only the care that was between us. In giving it, I received it back, twice blessed. For by needing me now, Iris also sheltered me, nourished me simply by having nothing to give of which she could be conscious. In losing her own life, Iris had given me a new one. I turned back onto the road.

Nothing is less predictable than dementia's ups and downs. As if to prove the point, Iris suddenly wrenched the door open and plunged out, vanishing without a sound into the darkness. I had seen, some miles back, that she had got her seat belt off, as she almost always did. She hated its constriction. And I had not had the heart or the will, or the courage, either—for this was happening at a time when she was so far away from me, and I was so lost in that vile Canetti nightmare—to stop the car and put the seat belt on again.

I was rounding a corner, going uphill, and I needed both hands on the wheel. There were headlights behind me. I braked to a stop, and the car behind rushed past, missing mine by inches and sounding a furious horn. Inane thoughts went through my head as I grabbed for the door handle to get out, just as Iris had done. We had been to a funeral and done badly, in all sorts of ways. And one funeral could so easily lead to another.

The road was quiet, quiet as the grave, and so dark that I could see nothing beyond the lights of the car. "Puss! Puss!" I called. "My old mouse, my old cat mouse! Where are you?"

No sound or reply. A strong, cold

wind was blowing steadily over the empty downs. In the daytime here, we had seen the racehorses at exercise, cantering across the downland in long cavalcades. I groped my way back onto the slope, along the side of the road. I shouted again and again. My voice sounded muffled and distracted, and the wind blew it away. The place seemed quite empty. Blind terror now as I rushed

farther and farther down the road. How far back could it have been? Another car's headlights approached, shooting swiftly toward me up the hill, and I peered down the tunnel of light, half hoping, half

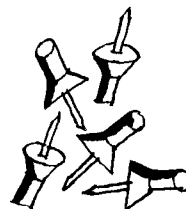
dreading to see Iris standing vacantly in the glare of it, silhouetted against the headlights of the onrushing car. I crouched against the hedge as the car tore past me. And all I thought was, I have lost my muse. Without her, I shall have nothing to write and nothing to do.

I tried to pull myself together. She must be here somewhere, I thought, like all those things that get lost in the house. Suddenly, there was a sort of noise coming to me in the wind. Not a distress noise, not a cry for help. It was more a sort of chuckling sound, faint but not far away.

Down the road, a few steps farther on, the shadow of the hedge lifted; there was a long gap in it. I plunged through and immediately lost my footing. I found myself rolling down a steep grassy slope. As I picked myself up, breathless, I found Iris beside me. She was lying on her back and laughing, quite unhurt. After jumping out of the car, she must have fallen down the slope, just as I had done, and landed safe at the bottom, like a little puffball. Her face was just visible in the gloom.

I started to kiss the face, and I started laughing, too, as we embraced each other. We would get ourselves home somehow, and I would not think about what was to come. Today would soon be over, and then there would be tomorrow, and then the next day, and perhaps the day after that.

OCTOBER, 1998: Quite suddenly, I had a breakdown. Shouting and sobbing and screaming. No reason for it. Iris at first smiled at me incuriously. She did not seem at all surprised. And





"I assume it's a different Rudy."

not very interested, either. What had happened to me? Why had I suddenly popped off? Iris might not be concerned, but I was. Abruptly, it seemed, heart had quietly escaped from me. And courage. And will. I could go on doing all the things I had to do, but none of them seemed to help us anymore.

I remembered an Old English poem that we all used to study (do they still?) for the English degree—"The Battle of Maldon." In those days, poets preferred heroic failure to brilliant success. In the poem, the English commander rashly allows the Vikings to cross the estuary at Maldon so that the two armies can fight on equal terms. He is killed. Discouragement sets in, but a veteran re-tainer rallies the ranks with a rousing war cry: "*Mod sceal the mare the ure mægen lytlath*" ("Courage shall be the more as our strength wanes"). Was I remembering it right?

That ancient defeat seemed the last straw. Suddenly, I started crying in earnest, gulping and hiccupping, with my mouth gaping open. At once, Iris took my hand, patted and stroked it. She hardly seemed to feel the hand or to know who I was. And yet out of her own absence was she trying to

give me comfort? As she had once been able to do; as if she could do it, still?

NOVEMBER, 1998: Iris won't eat, is barely drinking. This is a really alarming development. For two days, she doesn't seem to have had a pee, either. Again and again, I try a method that has always worked before—putting little pieces or spoonfuls in her mouth. Now she doesn't push them away, but her mouth remains closed, like shops on a Sunday morning. When I'd managed to feed her before—only a fortnight ago—I'd say, "The King was in the counting house, counting out his money / The Queen was in the parlor, eating bread and honey." She would respond by smiling, and the smile made her mouth open easily. Now when I put the spoon up to her she moves her head sharply, rolling her eyes like a dangerous horse. Before I can stop myself, I start to cry. Iris takes no notice.

I rush out of the house and walk around the block by myself. We used to make our walks last twenty minutes; when we go out now, it takes hardly any time. As the Alzheimer's progressed, I clung desperately to each stage of the disease: the sleeping and

the forgetting one; the wandering one; the sleepless and the distracted one. Each stage became a sort of friend. But now, this last stage—feeding Iris with a spoon, kissing her when she consents to take a drink—seems to have abandoned us.

When I get back to the house, Iris is still huddled at the kitchen table. Mechanically now, and without hope, I pick up a morsel of honey and bread and put it in a spoon. Without looking, she opens her mouth and takes it in. And then she smiles at me and makes her old cooing sound.

DECEMBER, 1998: Dr. Jacoby. A kind man, a scholar and a healer; also the knight-errant who has come to our rescue. He visits every few days. As I talk to him, Iris wanders in and out of the room, murmuring something, dragging an old jersey and a dress behind her. The first time he came, she had her smile for him and was almost social. All that is over now.

Dr. Jacoby says that the time has come, no doubt about it. If we can only get Iris into the right place. Vale House, in Oxford, is the best. No doubt about that, either. It is strictly for cases of need—there's very seldom a vacancy. "It's harder to get into than Eton," Dr. Jacoby says. He pauses, as if for reflection, and adds, "Or even Winchester." His face splits into a grin, and we both laugh.

But at once I feel a terrible anxiety. Will I be able to get my little Iris into this great, good place? Will she miss me? Will she hate it, want to escape? As things are now, surely not. And it will be all kindness and care. The real sort of care, which I cannot give.

Dr. Jacoby is back the next day to say that he thinks we'll manage it. A bit of luck—someone has died. Sheer relief floods through me, and I feel myself give a gasp. His dark eyes twinkle at me in a kindly, humorous way. He tells me more about the home. I'm too dazed to take it in properly, but he is saying that it's such a friendly place. No

visiting hours. I can spend all day there if I want. All night, too.

At last, the taxi comes. We've tried ringing for an ambulance, and we've tried the medical center. Busy at the moment. So sorry. Try again later. "Far called, our navies melt away." The line from Kipling's "Recessional," presaging the end of empire, rattles distractedly through my head.

The taxi-driver looks unperturbed when we tell him that the lady is on the stairs and we can't get her down. He comes in with a pleased, benevolent look. Glad to help. A kind friend has come to help, too, but, even between us, we cannot get Iris on her feet. Now the taxi-driver gives her his arm, calls her "my love," and she is soon outside and looking happy. I ask the taxi-driver about his taxi's doors. Yes, they are locked.

Suddenly, a marvellous peace and quiet. I hold Iris's hand, and we smile shyly and happily at each other. The last ride together. Like Anna Karenina's to the railway station.

But it feels more as if we have just got married, or as if we are about to get married and are going in the taxi together to the registrar, holding hands.

Trouble getting out. But a nurse takes gentle hold of Iris's no-longer-reluctant fingers. The fingertips of both hands. Walking slowly backward, Maureen—her name is on her overalls—leads Iris to a door. A smile on Maureen's face now, and on Iris's, too. They progress slowly and with a happy concentration, as if treading an informal minuet together.

Through the door and into Vale House. I find myself clinging now to another sort of joke—one I cannot share with Iris, with whom I would have shared it once, or with the staff, who are so kind and helpful. It is the memory of Mrs. Gamp in Dickens, and her "wale"—the vale of tears in which we are all destined to live. But this nice, casual house does not look like a "wale." Warmth, brightness, more kind faces, and the lounge, where patients are sitting as if in a snug, old-fashioned hotel. They pay us no heed, but one or two seem to regard us with benign, passive incuriosity.

Iris's smile transforms her own face now. She does not look back as

she enters the room, and I can see that she is still smiling.

IRIS died in Vale House, on February 8, 1999. She had grown steadily weaker. Without bother or fuss, as if someone she trusted had helped her to come to a decision, she stopped eating and drinking. Gentle pressure from those kind nurses, but no insistence. No horror of being put on a drip. During the last week, she took to opening her blue eyes very wide, as if merrily. Her face was still round and beautiful, although the body I held in my arms was shrunken and light. When she died, I closed her eyes and then opened them, as if we could still play together. She had looked and not seen us for days, but now she seemed to see me.

Tricia O'Leary, the head of the home, came in. She was crying—rather to my surprise, for she must have seen this happen a great many times before. But everyone in Vale House had come to love Iris very much. Her dying had been so quiet that I found myself saying to Tricia, "I wouldn't mind doing that myself." She smiled and took my hand, and Maureen brought me a cup of strong tea.

I thought thankfully of those "few words" no one was going to have to say at a funeral or a memorial service. Iris had told me years back that she didn't want one. She had been firm about it. So there would be a wake instead—a big party for all her friends.

I DON'T miss Iris. Perhaps because I don't "remember" her. Not in the way that I remember things and people in the past, who are truly gone. No wonder she didn't want a memorial service. She knew I would not need to remember her in that way.

When we left home in former times, before Iris became ill, she was always there to look after me. She enjoyed getting the tickets at the train station, paying the taxi, steering me through the caverns of the Underground. She kept me safe. And she will still do that at home, the place where in those days I used to look after her.

I sleep quietly now, with Iris quiet beside me. I drop off in the daytime, too, and wake up feeling calm and cheerful, as if Iris were there. But one morning recently I caught the tail of my vest on our Windsor chair and spilled my mug of tea. I wanted to tell Iris about it, but when I got upstairs I found that she was not there and I couldn't tell her. ♦

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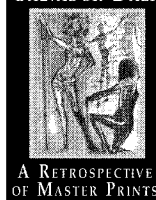
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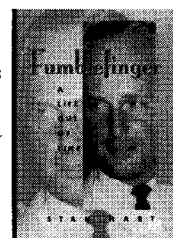
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OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

A PLACE IN THE COUNTRY

Aristocrats, monks, British revellers, stampeding holsteins—this wasn't your average pastoral retreat.

BY LAURA SHANE CUNNINGHAM

THE trip between the city and the country, which I undertake every few days, seems to reprise my life's journey. As I drive north, I pass the signposts of my childhood—the neon glow of Yankee Stadium, the projects that stand like pueblos at the edge of the Bronx. My first memories are there, in the apartment that my mother fled to when I was a baby and she had no husband or home of her own. We moved in with relatives—we were “seven people in three rooms,” as I often heard it expressed. The apartment faced a fire-engine company. Day and night, fire trucks roared forth, giving vehicular voice to our frustrations.

“Someday,” my mother promised, “we’ll have our own house, outside the city.” Every weekend, she and I set forth by bus or subway to differing destinations we called “the country.” (For a long time, I confused the Mt. Vernon that borders the Bronx with the Mt. Vernon in Virginia, the riverfront plantation where George Washington had lived.) The first country home I coveted on my own was only a block or two from where I lived—a small white farmhouse, complete with front porch and shutters, that still stood, constricted between high-rises. Whenever I passed this private house on my way to school, I marvelled at the way the little girl who lived there could fly from her front door to the outside without having to pass through the usual urban intermediary zones: the hall, the elevator, and the lobby. She and her uncounted brothers and sisters had no need of what hung heavy from a chain around my neck: keys.

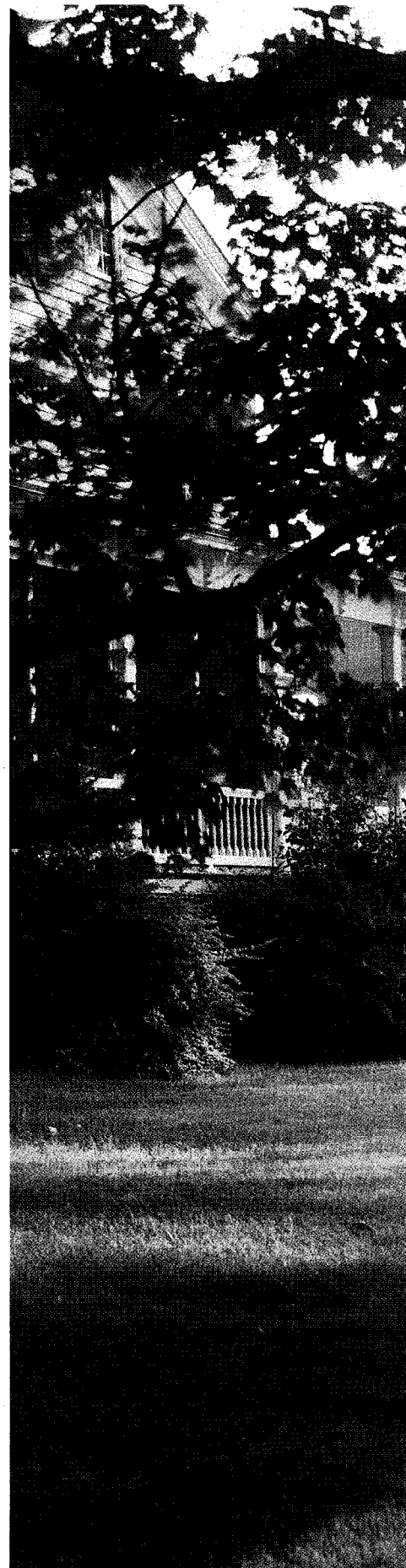
As an adult, I spent ten years searching for my own “private house.” By 1971, I was scouring the *Sunday Times* Real Estate section every weekend. Certain phrases lured me—“fenced for horses,” “former gristmill.” The *Times* functioned as mulch for my imagination,

just as the newspaper would later serve as the real thing, buried between layers of soil. Mentally, I travelled as far north as Maine and as deep south as Maryland. When I ventured forth to check out the properties, the shocks multiplied faster than the listings. The perfect dairy barn “on” the Delaware wasn’t on the river—it had been under it.

“Well,” said the realtor, as she tried to explain the water marks that ran like a border motif around the living room, “this is the floodplain.” The water had not risen that high in more than a decade, the owner insisted. But the scent of mildew filled the house, and a sump pump wheezed in the cellar.

Every house had an unforeseen flaw. My husband and I saw a pre-Civil War homestead upstate that had a footbridge over its private moat. We were smitten, but I became suspicious when the broker drove us to and from the property by a circuitous route. On my own, I walked to the back acres and spotted what she had tried to hide. It appeared to be a small nuclear facility, with red-and-white carnival-striped stacks: ground zero. Who cared now for the “original” cooking hearth, the random floors, the sewing nook? Radioactivity seemed to float, iridescent among the dust motes, through the spring sunshine.

I was looking for something that all brokers insisted was impossible to buy: an old house, set off the road, with several acres and complete privacy. “Complete privacy no longer exists,” I was told. “Not in your price range.” Only rock stars, movie moguls, or venture capitalists could buy seclusion. The most that could be obtained would be “some privacy,” I was advised by the Queen of the Brokers, a woman in Orange County who wore outsized sunglasses and kept her hair in a lacquered flip. “There is no such thing as ‘some’ privacy,” I argued. “A place is private or it is



Could we really buy this place? “T.



rd is pretty choosy," the realtor said. "You will have an interview." Photograph by Laura McPhee and Virginia Beahan.

not." She fought back, citing "privacy on the side" or "privacy to the rear." I vetoed these conditions, foreseeing a future in which I could slink from my home in only one direction. I felt I should be able to walk out my front door in a nightgown or less without being in plain view of my neighbors.

I had almost given up looking when my husband and I received a call from a broker in real-estate heat. "You must come up here right away," she said. "This one's going to go."

My husband and I resisted. It was raining; we had colds. We were preparing our income-tax returns. The last "find" I had driven a hundred miles upstate to view had been the estate of a deceased neo-Nazi. It had been private, all right—a chain-link-fenced bunker, built into the side of a mountain, with central floor drains so the house could be hosed down, and a room where Rottweilers had been kept. But the broker's voice burred on. "Do you remember, two years ago, the driveway we passed, and I said, Doesn't it look like England? That's an English estate down there. Don't you remember? You said, Thomas Hardy. 'Far from the Madding Crowd?'" She paused. "This is . . . a house that Eleanor Roosevelt would have bought."

Eleanor Roosevelt had long ago been awarded sainthood in my family. Not only was she revered for her politics and her active role as First Lady but she had once driven my grandmother home from a lecture in the Bronx. I grabbed the car keys and an umbrella. My hus-

band wrapped himself in a blanket and said, "You're driving." A hundred miles later, somewhere north of New Paltz, in a downpour, we turned in to a maple-lined drive, and suddenly even the rain seemed cosmetic—a silver scrim through which we could see a series of buildings that to my eyes seemed to constitute a classic English-style country estate. A white fog floated across the main house, the Manor, and drifted past a smaller building the broker called the Casino, a Victorian "play" house, and some carriage barns. Far down the driveway, peeking over a knoll, was the house we had come to see—an 1810 center-hall Colonial referred to by its name, the Inn. In the eighteen-nineties, the Inn had been run as an accommodation for travellers through the Shawangunk Mountains, and on the west side of its wraparound porch a carriage step still awaited visitors: I imagined ladies wearing Victorian dresses and high-buttoned shoes.

THE house was painted pale yellow, the porch gray and white, and it seemed to wink welcome to me from behind its many shuttered windows. It was set on twelve acres, most of which were given over to a sloping pasture—a herd of holsteins could be seen, their heads lowered as they munched the first shoots of spring onion. Beyond my imaginings were the outbuildings—a matching barn, and a stone-walled tennis court.

The realtors—one blond, one brunette, both beaming—waited on the

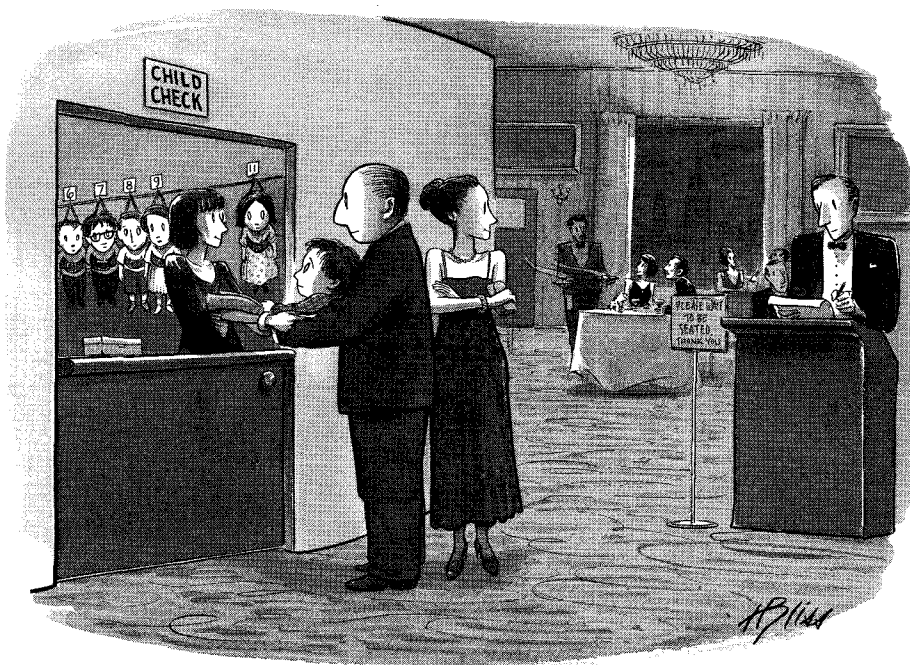
porch. My husband followed, wrapped squawlike in his blanket. In spite of his flu, he croaked his approval. "This is it," he whispered. We told the brokers that we would be happy to give the sellers, an English lord and lady, who still lived in the Manor, their asking price of a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, even before we had walked into the center hall and looked up the stairs at a warren of rooms. The realtor said there were eight bedrooms. This was so far beyond my childhood wish for a room of my own that I hesitated to go up to the second floor.

Downstairs, the Inn was divided into a front parlor, a country kitchen, and a formal dining room. I walked from room to room. When I finally ran upstairs to the front bedroom, I thought of my mother, Rosie, who had not lived past my eighth birthday. There were roses everywhere: in beribboned bouquets on the faded wallpaper, in small, hand-painted corsages on the wooden bedstead, and in the pattern of the slip-covered chaise longue. The chaise, plumped with down cushions, was set close to the fireplace. A stack of birch logs had been placed in the grate.

Toward the rear of the second floor, I stepped across what appeared to be a seam in the wide-board floors, the dividing line between the original 1810 house and an 1899 addition—a guest wing, called the Innlet. The two houses were joined, like Siamese twins, at the head: I stepped through a second-story Victorian linen closet to reach the three back guest rooms. Every detail—from the long silver keys to the white china doorknobs, and even the twin toilets, inserted in a narrow hall in 1890, with gravity-flow running water—struck me as perfect.

Could we really buy this place? "The Lord is pretty choosy," the realtor told us. "You will have an interview."

THE Lord was the grandson of the founder of this estate. His grandfather had been an American businessman named Frank Leggett, who, legend had it, had once stopped at the Inn and looked out its window and said, "I shall buy everything that I can see." And so he had—he'd acquired several area farms, eventually owning six houses and about seven hundred and fifty acres. By 1892, he had built the Manor, the Casino, and its carriage houses, and had united the



properties into a single, pastoral English-style "park," in a design attributed to the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted.

Leggett's daughter, Frances, had married a promising Englishman, David Margesson, who served as chief whip in the nineteen-thirties and as Secretary of State for War under Winston Churchill, for which he was granted a peerage. When they divorced, Frances returned to America to live at Ridgely. Her son, Frank, the current Lord Margesson, had been selling off chunks of the property over the past few years. But the realtor cautioned me that the Inn was dear to the family, and that His Lordship was an exacting man.

My husband and I dressed for the interview, which took place the following weekend. I wore a nineteen-forties plaid coat, with a Harrods label, that I'd found in a vintage-clothing store on Columbus Avenue. "What an excellent tweed" were Lord Margesson's first words to me as we stepped inside the Manor. It was early spring, but the house retained the chill of winter; the thermostat was kept low, just above the temperature at which veneer can crack.

I wonder if the Lord would have sold us the house if I hadn't been a writer. His mother had been a writer, too, he told me. She had published a book, *"Late and Soon: The Transatlantic Story of a Marriage."* He held up a copy. The title was from Wordsworth, and he quoted: "The world is too much with us; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: / Little we see in Nature that is ours; / We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!" The Lord also touched on the religious connection between the Inn and a famous celibate monk, Swami Vivekananda, who had visited in 1899. "He blessed two women in the house."

Lord and Lady appraised us with their gaze. They led us past a Della Robbia in the main marble hall, to a sitting room, where we took our places on an antique sofa. A small fire crackled in the grate. Much of the carpet and upholstery was frayed, but this wear added a gloss of beauty and authenticity to the room. I felt as if I had stepped into a hybrid British play, a cross between "Hay Fever" and "The Bald Soprano." The Lord was perfectly cast as himself—aquiline features, paper-white skin, a tall, bony build. Lady Margesson was a bit more offbeat—Finnish by birth, she

had acquired her husband's British accent and manner, but her eyes, slightly slanted above high cheekbones, flashed with merriment. The Margessons, who had raised four children, were not old, but they seemed to belong to another time. Their faces looked blanched, as if they had just come into the glare of the current year and been taken aback. Lady Margesson had more white in her hair than was typical for her age, as if, like the plants in the Manor, she had been nipped by a killing frost.

Lord and Lady were drinking Cutty Sark. "Our anti-freeze," Lady Margesson said, cupping her hands around the tumbler. They offered us drinks, and we chatted, the Margessons warning us off a famous local restaurant, known for its strained creativity (etched-glass menus, viewed with candleholders—"that sort of thing"). "We like blueberries," Lady Margesson said, elongating the vowels ("bluuue-berries"), "but we don't care for blueberry soup."

"The Inn still has a special aura," His Lordship remarked. Lady Margesson added, "We lived there for a time ourselves. When the children were small. It was bliss." They both sighed, recalling how much cheaper the Inn had been to heat.

Then the Lord donned gloves and, carrying a walking stick, escorted us on a tour of the grounds. As he led us down a hidden path behind the Manor, he flicked away a vine of poison ivy that might have otherwise grazed him. "You brute," he said. He took us over a plank footbridge that led to a swimming pond. The pond was partially concealed by weeping willows, and followed a cleft in the landscape; the water fed into a meadow where more cows could be seen, posed as if for a painting. A clipped lawn led to a handmade dock and then to the water. As we approached, a gray heron took flight. I oohed and ahed, while my husband shushed me, fearful I would jinx the sale or raise the price. But the Lord and Lady accepted our offer of their asking price—a giveaway, even then, in 1981. In return, we vowed to honor the Lord's restrictive covenants, which would be revealed later, in full detail, in our deed. He gave us the gist: "No subdivision, noxious smells, sounds, or lights that could glare into the windows of the Manor. . . . No

motorcycles, no snowmobiles, no salting the road for winter ice," and so on.

I noticed that the word "noxious" was often repeated, along with "objectionable." Sometimes Lord Margesson used both words in the same sentence. When he showed us "our" *rosa rugosa* bushes, he said, "In summer, you'll be subjected to the Japanese beetles mating two and three at a time on your rosebuds—it's so objectionable—and then, if you kill them in a Bag-A-Bug, you must dispose of their noxious remains."

As we walked along the property line, Lord Margesson remarked, "Your boundary goes on the diagonal here." He indicated a triangular patch of mowed grass in front of the house. I wondered why the line was cut in such an odd way, but I was afraid to appear critical.

Seventeen years would pass before I knew the reason for that diagonal cut. By then, the property line would be of crucial interest to me, and I would spend thousands in legal fees to determine my right to prevent a threat posed from "the other side." But, of course, I knew nothing of the future on this spring day, and I chose not to give the triangular design of my front lawn any further thought. My husband and I had started our life together in a three-sided garret in Greenwich Village; perhaps we were destined to occupy pie-slice-shaped spaces. In the heat of purchase, we also promised to pay our share of the care for dozens of old sugar maples that lined the Avenue, as His Lordship called the driveway. We almost skipped up the winding path to the Manor. I could smell the soil as the sun warmed it. Robins tugged at worms. Bona-fide Eastern bluebirds flew past in azure pairs and sat on perches to twitter at us.

We and the house were sold. The Lord would hold the mortgage at twelve and a half per cent. I envisioned him actually holding it, as a yellowed parchment scroll, in his fine-boned white hands.

THREE months later, my husband and I drove up at sunset to take possession. It was July 2nd, and the grounds were now almost violently verdant, the sugar maples heavy-headed, like giant broccoli. Across the pasture, the cows walked single file, the



lead cow's bell clanging melodically.

The air was still with the moist heat of near-evening, and a shocking pink streaked across the western sky. For a moment, everything we saw was rose-tinted, even the cows. The roses themselves were in bloom, a thousand flowers on the old rugosa hedge that grew in front of the house.

My husband picked me up and carried me across the threshold. We'd been married for fifteen years, but we were still in our thirties; we had no children yet, and this was our first real home. We laughed as we kissed.

Inside the Inn, we found a welcome note from the Lord and his Lady, and a chilled bottle of champagne. My husband had no sooner set me down to pop the cork than we heard a car pull into the circular gravel drive. A couple got out, carrying suitcases and waving a key ring. They said that they had rented the Innlet. We were vaguely aware that there had been British renters in the guesthouse on weekends; we'd been told that they had returned to England. But in a real-estate sleight of hand the tenants had sublet to this new couple, who were now demanding that we turn on the hot-water heater so that they could shower.

And so my dream of privacy ended and my true role as homeowner—that of custodian—began. As the light faded, I stood looking at the hedge roses, and the lawn beside them seemed to come alive. The Japanese beetles, as predicted by His Lordship, emerged from their winter's hibernation and whirled through the air before alighting on the rose petals and eating them.

As I watched in horror, I also became aware of a strange glow in the sky. The sun had set, but a blood-red aura appeared across the fields, emanating from a site a half a mile away. I knew that there was a commuter college somewhere over there, known as "Uck" or "Ugly College" (officially, Ulster County Community College), and as the evening descended the school's system of anticrime and parking-lot lights flared into phosphorescence. Atmospheric conditions stained the light red, and the college glowed like a Martian heliport.

Later, I learned that Lord Margesson's mother had donated forty of the acres on which Ugly College squatted. Miss Leggett had envisioned "some-

thing more like Harvard" being constructed, and she was horrified at what followed—a collection of flat-roofed, spam-colored brick buildings. Lord Margesson himself had tried to "plant it out." For Uck emitted what he called "noxious noises": rock concerts, soccer games. Indeed, His Lordship would frequently phone the college and ask them to please be silent. And, more often than not, Uck would obey. The land, after all, had come from Mother.

So, on my first night in residence at the Inn, I tried to absorb the various shocks. My husband looked over at me and said, "Are you *crying*?" I denied that I was. I was sure that His Lordship had left instructions as to how to deal with problems, and he had. Beside the bottle of champagne was a note extolling the abilities of the seventy-eight-year-old British caretaker, Cecil Green. He would solve everything. "Cecil," said the note, "is the Brain."

I phoned the carriage house up the hill, where Cecil had lived for almost sixty years, and begged him to "come down." He appeared, driving a '68 Pontiac, which was his "new" car. In a style

ELEGY

THE GOD OF THE SEA GREET'S BRAN IN THE LAND OF THE WAVES

(FROM THE EIGHTH-CENTURY IRISH "VOYAGE OF BRAN")

When Bran and his companions had been at sea for two days and two nights, they saw a man in a chariot coming toward them over the sea. The man sang to them and made himself known, saying he was Manannan. These are some of the verses he sang:

Bran is astonished at the beauty of the waters;
his coracle lifts on the clear wave.
I ride where he rows; my chariot plunges, I
surge through a blossoming plain.

Bran rolls with his boat, the sea lifts and
lays him, he leans to the prow.
My chariot axle threshes a surf of wildflowers,
my wheels are spattered with flower juice.

Bran sees the backs of the waves like the quick
backs of dolphins; the sea surface glitters.
I see greensward, wild roses and clover,
the pelt of the grazing.

You look and next thing salmon leap out
of the foam; mother-wet silver.
They are my calves, my calves' licks, my
lambs, my bleating cavorters.

that had fallen by the wayside elsewhere, Cecil still wore a daily uniform—a green jumpsuit—and he always kept a pipe clenched between his teeth. He knew everything about the Inn; he understood the basement, the grunting furnace. He knew the map to "the zones"—a confusing system of heat pipes.

The single drawback to Cecil was that he was practically deaf. So when I screamed, "How do you turn on the hot-water heater?," he answered, "The flowers need water, no rain for a week."

Which was why we also had to retain his assistant, Stewart Lee, who wore an orange cap and his own version of a vintage uniform—a nineteen-forties brown jacket. Stewart moved close to Cecil and bellowed into his better ear, "Hot-water heater!" ("He had a hearing aid, yes, yes," said Stewart, "but he lost it back in the sixties, cutting down vines behind the tennis court.") They soon had the hot-water heater burning, but Cecil, in the first of a long series of basement consultations, warned us, "It costs a hundred dollars a night to run." In a style I would become accustomed to, he stood stock-still,

One chariot, one charioteer—me at full tilt—
that's all you can see.
You are blind to what's here. The land is a drumming
of hoofbeats, a mane-flow, a host at the gallop.

The land is immense, we swarm in its
bounty, it flourishes for us.
You are welcome: ford the pure crystal, be
arrayed in gold cloth.

Your coracle sailed on the top of a wood, what
you felt was the wind in the trees.
Reach down from the prow, gather up
the fruit of the branches.

Men and women, lovely, at ease among
windfalls. No sin and no forcing.
They rise off the forest floor, they pour
out the wine.

We are from the beginning, won't grow
old or go under the earth.
We cannot imagine debility; we
are unmarked by guilt.

—TRANSLATED BY SEAMUS HEANEY

road led directly past the main barn, which sat between a 1710 stone house and a clapboard cottage belonging to the father-son team—Chester Damon, Sr., and Chester Damon, Jr., known as Jay—who owned and operated the farm.

On the day we met them, Chester, Sr., and his wife, Bonnie, were walking across the barnyard to their cottage. Bonnie held a wire egg basket and Chester was saying, "How many eggs today, Mother?" She answered, "Twenty-four, Father."

Chester was slight, and seemed permanently tanned. He wore mud-caked bib overalls and a seersucker milking cap. Bonnie was smaller and rounder, with fair skin, blue eyes, and sensibly cut graying hair. Chester was around fifty-two then, and Bonnie somewhat younger. They'd been married since she was eighteen. "Sorry if the house smells like old wet dog," she said as she invited us in. "But we have an old wet dog." Dixie, an Australian blue heeler, lay, paws crossed, under the table, pups sucking from her elongated nipples. "Good cow dog," Chester said. "Part dingo."

We shared some hot cherry pie, made from fresh-picked fruit, and washed it down with thick, "grass-scented" milk. I wondered if they didn't worry about cholesterol. "Oh, we used to drink straight cream," Bonnie said.

Chester invited us to see the operation, and led us into the great barn, where the hay was stacked two stories high. We followed him through a zig-zag corridor, walled in by hay, into the area where the milkers stood, listening to Patsy Cline on a boom box: "I'm crazy . . . crazy for loving you. . . ." "They milk better to music," Chester said. The cows turned to gaze at us, with a benevolent interest that I soon learned was typical of them—an animal soulfulness that I came to call their "bovinity."

In the bull pen, we were introduced to the resident male: Astro. (Bulls were named like the villains of action-adventure films—Astro, Terminator, Dominator.) Astro wore an actual brass ring through his nose and led a sensual, if constricted, existence: Chester explained that it took at least two heifers to keep Astro "satisfied" and everyone on the farm wanted him to be "satisfied." If he wasn't, it was understood, he could trash his pen and trample all of us.

Life on the farm was filled with dan-

breathing hard for several moments, then took a deep draw on his pipe and made a pronouncement: "Electric water heater costs too much. Get an oil-fired one. And reroute the furnace pipe—Miss Leggett had it that way because she said it made a rude noise up the chimney. Fuel company always said it could blow up this way."

On our first morning in residence, we woke to an invading armada of pickup trucks and vans, their services emblazoned on their sides. The first worker to appear was the tree man, Arthur Woodcock (his actual name). He informed us that the avenue of sugar maples, which had looked so lush, was actually an outdoor hospice for terminally ill trees. "They all have crotch or butt rot" was his diagnosis. The projected medical bill to treat their distress and chain their sick limbs together: ten thousand dollars. A cast of dozens followed: the house came with a master plumber, a man to service the fire extinguishers, and a water-conditioning expert who promised to treat what he referred to as our "fart water." Unless we installed a special filter system, sulfur gas would permeate our

home, blacken our silverware, and, whenever we showered, fill the air with fumes, like an exploded stink bomb. We signed on and on.

THEN we met our neighbors. I had been aware, of course, of the dairy farm, in my peripheral vision. It rested downhill to the east, at an aesthetic distance of a quarter-mile. From my kitchen window, I saw a Tinkertoy image of a farm—red barn, silver silos, the domino pattern of the cows, a tiny yellow tractor puffing blue smoke. I was aware, too, of the farmer's deeded right to graze the herd on our pasture. I was less cognizant of the complications of operating a dairy farm: the tractors and manure spreader soon began chugging up our hill.

My husband and I walked down to the farm to get a better understanding of the situation. Approaching on foot from the Inn, we came upon the resident herd before we saw the people and their habitations. The barnyard looked like a resort for cows. The holsteins were lounging by a babbling brook, some wading up to their black-and-white ankles, others licking a molasses wheel. The farm

ger. Chester had almost lost his arm to a revolving metal conveyor called "the barn cleaner." Many a farmer had been pulled into such machines: "If my shirt had been any good, my arm would have been caught," he said. "My shirt was so old, the cloth ripped." The farmer down the road had been less fortunate; he was missing several fingers.

It was apparent to us that we should not interfere in any way with the workings of Damon Ridgely, as the farm was known. There was no question that they could use the back tractor road. We would not plant it out. I agreed when I heard my husband offer to forgive the sixty-dollar lease on our pasture.

When we returned to the Inn, we found a note from Lord and Lady Margesson apologizing for having been "back in"; they had had to move some of the furniture—or "fuur-niture," as it was pronounced—which seemed to be part of the movable feast at Ridgely. The Margessons could become very emotional about objects, as I learned the next day, when Lady Margesson phoned, near tears. I feared that something had happened to His Lordship. But, she explained, her voice cracking, "Teapot. Been with us since the blitz. It . . . slipped from my hands as I was emptying tea leaves in the toilet. It just slid and broke in a thousand pieces." She took a deep breath. "Frank's been awfully good about it."

The next morning, I awoke to feel a rumble that shook the house. Still half asleep, I thought, An earthquake. Then the rotary phone next to my bed rang. It was Lord Margesson: "Have you seen them, running with their ungainly rumps, leaving their noxious patties?" I looked out the bedroom window and saw the Damons' herd—a hundred and sixty-eight holsteins—stampeding toward the formal lawns and gardens of the Manor.

Within seconds, a pickup truck and a car roared into my driveway. Chester and his son, Jay, leaped out of their vehicles, escorted by an auxiliary force of wives and children. "Head 'em off!" Chester yelled. I raced out in my nightgown, and joined a tightening circle. We all walked, arms outstretched, toward the cows. It wasn't simple to redirect the herd; the lead cow kept taking off toward the gardens and the possibility of the town road beyond. The other hundred and sixty-seven cows, snorting fore and aft, tried to follow. At last, we forced the herd to trot down the farm road, and

as they picked up speed their domino pattern blurred into a true-life animation, a black-and-white river that flowed downhill into the sunrise.

I realized then that I had not merely acquired a place in the country; I had entered another culture. Within days, the original British tenants in the back returned and took up residence in the Innlet. They arrived with two children, two dachshunds, and a parrot that spoke with an English accent. They had lots of friends on or around the estate, and when I arrived for my next weekend I found them playing tennis on "my" court, while eleven guests (I counted them) lounged on the Adirondack furniture drinking gin.

I ran upstairs to the rose-papered room and threw myself on Miss Leggett's chaise longue and looked up at the life-size portrait of her that stood, somewhat askew, against the wall by my bed. Miss Leggett, regal in a full-length gown but stern of lip and brow, seemed to narrow her varnished gaze at me, as if to say, "My dear, you should have known."

IT wasn't long before my husband persuaded me that we should have our own livestock, even though we could join the animals only on weekends. The goats arrived first. I'd always liked goat cheese, and I imagined that a few dainty dairy goats would supply chèvre or at least feta cheese. The goats originally belonged to another new character in our life—Jill, the Goat Girl, who was nominally also our cleaning person. She was about twenty, with buttocks that burst from her cutoffs, and a penchant for arranging still-lives as she cleaned the Inn. After a Jill cleanup, I would find my gloves crossed on a lace throw, a nightie draped over the bedpost. At her own house, she kept a menagerie, including goats, which were reproducing out of control. She kept showing my husband "baby pictures" of the littlest one, Lulubelle. But, of course, one cannot keep a solitary goat. "Goats are herd animals," Jill told us. "You'll have to take at least her sister for company."

She delivered Lulu and Lulubelle one summer afternoon, but instead of filing into the paddock that we had prepared they leaped, gazellelike, over the fencing and bounded toward the Manor. It took all afternoon, in hundred-degree heat, to recapture the baby.

Lulubelle was a black-and-brown

SHOWCASE BY MARC HOM

DARK STAR

VIOLA jokes, in the classical-music world, are the equivalent of Polish jokes, but in the hands of Yuri Bashmet the instrument is a serious, even a demonic, thing. "The viola is . . . very mystical and mysterious," Bashmet has said. It is "not a woman and not a man; it is in the middle." Bashmet can give his fiddle, a 1758 Testore, the high, glittering brilliance of a violin or the low, glowering eloquence of a cello. It would be yet another viola joke to call him the greatest living violist: there are not enough candidates for the position to set him in bold enough relief. On his best nights, he is one of the most electrifying musicians around.

His signature piece is the Shostakovich Viola Sonata, the Soviet master's final work. He will play it at Tanglewood on July 29th. Nothing in the music is particularly complicated from a purely technical standpoint, but Bashmet gives Shostakovich's solitary notes a dire beauty: they shine like light from dying stars. An intriguing, vaguely sinister presence onstage, he seems to be lost in his own world.

Among his friends, Bashmet becomes another person—a distinctly free-spirited Russian, a bit of a goofball, with a loose and sometimes careless attitude toward his career. He was a rock guitarist in his youth, and lately he has diverted much of his energies to conducting. Although he has not worked terribly hard to establish himself in the West, he is already, at the age of forty-five, a legendary figure on the international music scene. The two great postwar Russian composers, Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina, have written major concertos for him. The conductor Valery Gergiev never misses an opportunity to work with him. In his recordings for RCA and Sony, he has run through the major viola works and begun to appropriate the repertory of other instruments—Brahms' Clarinet Quintet, for example. Again at Tanglewood, on August 1st, Bashmet will play Sancho Panza to Yo-Yo Ma's Don Quixote in the great Richard Strauss tone poem. In the future, he says, he may switch roles and take on the mad knight himself. —ALEX ROSS



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"We're planning on sending him away to be reared by experts."

kid, small enough to carry in one's arms, like a puppy. She had tiny hooves and pointy little horns, and loved to trot up on the porch and watch TV through the window. I understood in about five minutes why goats are often sacrificed during Satanic rites.

We could not catch her big sister, who was leaping and bleating all around the property. But Jill assured us that if we tied Lulubelle to the barn her sister would not be able to stay away. "They're herd animals," she reminded us. "Nothing worse for a goat than to be alone."

We kept the goats, but gave up the idea of cheese when we saw—and smelled—the male stud goat who would have to impregnate the girls to get them to produce. Instead, we turned to the idea of poultry: Wouldn't the fresh eggs be lovely, the proud crow of a rooster, the winsome yellow fluffballs of chicks? We started with a "test" chicken—a rooster, hand-selected from a Perdue-style mass-poultry farm down the road. Mr. Chicken had no distinguishing characteristic other than a particularly blank expression. He seemed stupid, even for a chicken.

The first day, in our ignorance, we fed him birdseed, from a package for parakeets. He pecked up the entire box in about an hour. Thus began our long schlepps to the animal-feed store, with

its massive fifty-pound sacks of varying chows. It was dangerous to venture in there, because my husband would spot ads for local livestock. I'd catch him with phone numbers for lop-eared rabbits, guinea hens, Hampshire hogs, and a series of "championship chicks." Which is how we ended up with twenty-four *more* chickens.

Suddenly, Mr. Chicken began to crow. And crow. Farmer Damon said, "Well, whaddya expect? Before, he had nothing to crow about!" Now he was mating promiscuously with dozens of the young females. We were soon gathering so many eggs that we did not know what to do with them. We ate prizefighter breakfasts of four-egg omelettes, and whipped up homemade mayonnaise.

Which possibly caused my fat-clogged brain to accept it when my husband ordered the Toulouse goslings. What exactly were they for? In Toulouse, France, these geese are raised as meat birds. Their wide bottoms are a base for fatty pâtés. Of course, that would not happen to our geese, who arrived, six of them, with eggshell still on their heads, like little yarmulkes. I opened the box, and it was love at first sight—for them. It is always love at first sight for goslings: they "imprint" on the first "form" that they see. They were charming chartreuse fuzz-puffs with

splayed orange feet and peeping voices. Their infancy lasted an unbelievably short time. In fact, it was lucky for them that they had a grace period in which they could be viewed as attractive. I whisked them home and set them up in the barn, but one gosling began to droop and shiver and didn't last an hour. Panicked, I packed up the five survivors and carried them into the guesthouse, where they instantly perked up, listening to National Public Radio.

By dawn, the stench in the house was unbearable, and I had to move them to the barnyard. Within days, it seemed, they ballooned into twenty-pound fatties, with narrow heads and raucous voices. Their coronas of fuzz were gone, their voices changed. They were . . . geese.

Still, when I led them to the barn or to their new turquoise kiddie pool, they walked behind me in formation. They even "groomed" me: if I lay down on my outdoor garden chaise, the five geese gathered to smooth down my jeans by working the denim through their bills. They would insist on following me single file as I took what had once been solitary sunset strolls. The goats liked to come, too, sometimes prancing ahead and doubling back to execute a mock ramming. Often, we walked as much as a mile, to a scenic overlook above the cow pastures and cornfields, where we would all settle down and view the farm from above, feeling the sun on our faces. The goats were especially affectionate at such moments; sometimes I sat against Lulu's great warm belly as if it were a couch.

Late one afternoon, we were half asleep in our contentment, sunk in the high grass, when a silver fox came flying at the geese, almost airborne in a diagonal run for the kill. Upon seeing me, the fox levitated higher, and, like a cartoon villain out of Looney Tunes, seemed to reverse himself in midair, and retreated.

The appearance of the silver fox alerted me to the real business that went on in that meadow. We were, of course, relaxing on a killing ground—it was eat or be eaten out there. I gathered up my group, and we marched home.

I WAS to become increasingly aware of the human equivalent of such competition, and the drastic possibilities of change. For many years, Ridgely seemed immune to the passage of time—I often felt that I inhabited the past when I was there. But I also knew,

from my long search for this place, that a key element of owning country property was defending one's borders. I suspected that ownership was a potential evil: Wasn't territorial dispute the heart of war? Who didn't feel a primal swell of rage at the trespass of a stranger?

As I approached my fourteenth year at Ridgely, the lay of the land had remained remarkably serene: I looked out at views that had not changed in more than a century. I began my days there sipping coffee enriched by the milk of the cows I watched from my kitchen window. Over the years, I had begun to spend more than weekends "on the farm." More and more of my emotional life was led upstate: when we adopted two baby girls, it was to the Inn that we brought them "home." I turned to the farm in times of stress—for an entire year when my husband and I separated, for example—and I might hole up there for a month to work on a new book or a play.

Progress had quickened all around Ridgely—mountains had been removed to make way for malls, and those malls had spawned mini-malls. Even within my own barn, change had been violent: weasels had attacked the hens as they sat on their nests, and the surviving chickens, goats, and geese were then given away—for their own protection—to a historical farm exhibit. Yet Ridgely remained curiously untouched: the Lord and Lady still reigned in the Manor; the Damons still called out for the cows in the time-honored way ("Come, Boss, come, Boss. . .").

The Great Change, as I came to regard it, began with a rumor. Just as there had been whispers that Wal-Mart was coming, there were murmurs that "the Swamis" would be "returning" to Ridgely. Over the years, I'd noticed that devotees of the original Swami—the Swami Vivekenanda, who had visited Ridgely in the eighteen-nineties—often returned on the Fourth of July, which was the anniversary of the Hindu monk's death. Swami Vivekenanda had been a handsome sage in his thirties when he cast his spiritual net over Frank Leggett and his future wife, Betty, who became Lord Margesson's grandparents: much of their courtship had been conducted in salons where the Swami lectured against materialism. Since then, the devotees, some clad in traditional saffron-colored robes, would occasionally gather around the Manor to lay offerings of flowers and

to pray at the foot of a giant tree called the "Prophet's pine," which was sacred to the dead celibate monk's memory.

But suddenly, in early 1995, the Manor was for sale, and Ramakrishna returned—en masse—to try to buy it. "A thousand a month to mow the lawn," His Lordship lamented. "How is one to live?" The upkeep of the Manor and of the eighty-three-acre estate had become the kind of commitment that only a software millionaire or a movie star could handle; the ordinary Lord could not stem the tide. There was a brief rumor that Uma Thurman might be looking at it. But, in the end, the most serious interest came from "the followers of the Swami Vivekenanda."

This interest climaxed at a time when cults, like the Hale-Bopp crowd, were receiving a great deal of negative publicity. And even my friends who frequented ashrams did not want to live next to one. "But this won't be an ashram," Lord Margesson assured me. "This will be a holy shrine. With only a few celibate nuns in residence."

I tried not to panic. Even celibate nuns sounded threatening to me. My divorce had just become final, and I was now, after all those years of marriage, living the way my own mother once had, as an unmarried mother. I wasn't certain I wanted all that celibacy close by. I was beginning to live in fear of celibacy.

Negotiations had gone on for two years, as groups associated with the Ramakrishna Order tried to raise the money to purchase the Manor. The celibate-female faction had failed, but it was replaced by a more competitive coed group based in California. "There will now be male *and* female celibate monks," His Lordship told me, "and a resident Swami. Don't worry, however. Nothing will change. Their goal is to preserve Ridgely as a shrine. In fact, my bedroom will be the actual Shrine Room. And Helena and I shall remain as curators."

In the late spring of 1997, as the first summer wind rippled through the hay

and Chester Damon rode his red rig out into the meadow, His Lordship phoned me to say that the Swami's advance man, an officer of the religious society, would like to come down to meet me. "You've probably noticed him in front of the Manor? The Burl Ives type?"

The next thing I knew, the Burl Ives type was looming over the knoll of our dividing pasture. As he came closer, I made out his reddened features and the blue tattoos that covered his exposed forearms like an external vascular system. He introduced himself as a former marine and now a "follower." (He was not, he told me, celibate.) "Wherever we go, we try to please our immediate neighbors," he said, avoiding my gaze, as I served him tea on the porch. "The word most often used to describe us is 'invisible.'"

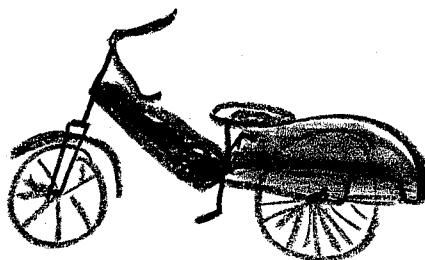
"Good," I said. "I like the word 'invisible' to describe you." I expressed my concern—that because of the eccentric angle of the property line, that weird diagonal cut on my front lawn, I felt a bit vulnerable to straying devotees. But I understood from his description of their activities that the followers would stay back, far back, on the main part of their eighty-three acres, and he proposed a buffer zone, which we then walked. He even offered to plant trees or construct a fence. Since we were walking a line that was ten acres away from my house, I rose to what I thought was his gracious intent and declined his offer.

All would be well, Burl Ives promised. The Swami would want to put in a Shrine Trail—it sounded to me like a Hindu version of the Stations of the Cross—but a religious trail of that nature would be secluded, probably somewhere "behind the Manor."

"Just so long as that Shrine Trail doesn't lead to me," I laughed. With a smile and a handshake, we parted, on the knoll that overlooked our common border.

Six months later, we stood there again—this time in a stinging sleet—arguing over the revised Shrine Trail, which the order now proposed to put well within sight of my slanted border. (They denied ever having proposed a buffer zone or a fence.) By then, the resident Swami—Swami Atmarupananda, or Swami A., as he likes to be called—was also with us, a hood pulled over his head against the wet and needling near-snow.

"But I sent flowers to your opening," I said. "I welcomed you." Most signifi-



cantly, I had not opposed their "change of use" when it came before the town planning board. I had been as eager as all my neighbors to attend the initial meet-the-Swami party at a neighbor's house.

The Swami had turned out to be an American man of perhaps fifty, dressed in country-squire fashion—a tweed jacket with elbow patches. He was escorted by two slim blondes. These were the celibate female monks we'd heard about, also costumed in correct *Town & Country* attire—sweaters and long plaid skirts. I couldn't help wondering why they were so all-American in appearance, and so warmly dressed, having come directly from Southern California. Yet

they were undeniably pleasant. The Swami's stare was a bit glazed, but he smiled a lot as he spoke, in an acquired Indian accent that recalled Peter Sellers. It was impossible not to like the Swami. He even laughed about being a Swami.

So I dutifully attended a series of "events" at the Shrine, as the Manor was now known. I met the followers, who were an eclectic group. Most were American, some wheelchair-bound, many elderly; there were several younger men in golf jackets, and a few slim vegetarian girls, with curling hair and misty gazes. At the opening ceremony, Swami A. sprinkled water, burned a bit of incense, and distributed a glossy prospectus advertising the need to raise a million two hundred thousand dollars to complete the Shrine at Ridgely. The Burl Ives type reappeared, wearing a Ridgely T-shirt, and passed a platter he called the *prasad*, which included Halloween candy corn and mini Mars bars.

At worst, they seemed tacky. And so I had been lulled into not opposing their plans—that is, not until they were finalized, at the town planning-board meeting. It seemed that they had submitted a map, without notifying me, of the proposed site of the Shrine Trail, which showed that it would now be positioned close to my property, and would have ten shrines, each achieving a potential height of six feet, stationed at intervals along its length.

Matters deteriorated the next day, when we walked the line, which was still in plain sight of my front yard. During that confrontation in the sleet, Burl Ives said that I presented "a prob-

lem" to the followers, just as they presented a problem to me. As he put it, "Some of them would be disturbed by the sight and sound of your children playing in front of your house."

"Well," I replied, "I don't think that's a very spiritual thing to say." Later, the Swami apologized for the way his associate had "sounded." To date, no shrines have been erected on the trail, and no processions of devotees have walked the sta-



tions. Maybe they just haven't got around to buying the shrines. It's also possible that the devotees fear Lyme disease, and don't want to walk through the tick-infested meadow. One day, from my window, I detected a commotion on the trail and ran out to see who was there, only to discover the resident flock of thirty-eight wild turkeys, scurrying toward the Manor.

Meanwhile, the Swami has begun to metamorphose into something more familiar. This past fall, he appeared riding a leaf blower, trying to recapture in its swelling bag the ton of foliage that falls from the maple trees lining our shared driveway.

ONE snowy night in January, I walked up the diagonal cut of my boundary, to the spot where my land met the Shrine Trail. I didn't expect to run into anyone out there, in a snowstorm, but a gray shape came toward me in the blue light, and the austere figure of Lord Margesson appeared. It seemed the right moment to ask him why the border between us had been cut in this weird angled fashion.

"I had to be certain that what I looked at from my window at the Manor would remain as it was," he answered. "The way the land was cut would insure that I own what I can see, and that my view would never change."

Ah, but both our views would soon change, in ways we could not have foreseen. Within months, the Lord's relationship with the Swami and the Ramakrishna Order became less compatible: he and Lady Margesson told me that they would not be manor-mates much longer. "We are moving to a cond-ohhh in Port Ewen," Lady Margesson announced.

I had not recovered from the shock of the Lord and Lady's departure and the sight of the "fuuur-niture" being

carted away in a truck when Chester Damon broke the news: the farm, too, would come to a sudden end. It had been purchased for more than a million dollars by a psychiatrist from Riverside Drive, who had paused in the area the previous fall to "Pick Your Own Pumpkin." The date had already been set for the auction of the equipment. After that, the cows would be sold.

So it was that, on the last cold day of spring, I found myself rushing from my New York apartment before 3 A.M. in order to arrive at the farm for a final day of milking. Although I had often walked through the barn, picked up the milk can with my name on it, and sat down in Chester and Bonnie's kitchen to have tea, I'd never really stayed through a whole workday with them. And now these days were finite.

AT 3:05, I stop at an all-night café at Eighty-fifth and Broadway to buy a latte for the drive north. When my hand closes around the warm paper cup, I have a flash of Jay Damon lightening his coffee by holding a mug under the teat of the lead cow. I drive up the West Side Highway, past the dark façades of Riverside Drive, and think of the psychiatrist who's buying the farm—he's up there, presumably sleeping, oblivious of the upset he is causing. I drive nonstop, over the limit, as if I could overtake the future.

As I pass my Bronx signposts, I recall the high points: the time the cows escaped, and, most indelibly, the time a heifer went into labor in my pasture. I heard the cow bellow and Chester yell, "Somebody get down to the barn and get the obstetrical chains!" But the calf came before the chains; Chester had to pull it out with his belt. He pulled so hard that the belt broke. And the calf swung into view—black and white and apparently lifeless. Chester grabbed some twigs and jammed them in the calf's nostrils to stimulate the breathing reflex. When that failed, he said, "Don't tell my wife," and lowered his own mouth onto the calf's, exchanging human for animal breath. The calf's rib cage rose; a shiver rippled through the animal's body; its eyes swivelled into position. Its limbs twitched, and it tried to stand, looking toward the black-and-white bulk that was its mother.

"Ahh, it's a bull calf, not worth the

effort," Chester said, in his characteristic mutter.

I skid to a stop at the farm. The lights aren't on yet, so I park my car and go in on foot, tiptoeing in my rubber boots over the frozen tread marks of the tractors. The coyotes howl from the back snowfields.

I pass Jay's house first—it is his marital separation that is causing the sale—and walk across the frozen barnyard, looking for a light cue from Chester and Bonnie's house. The end of the family farm is also the division of the family. One wonders how to separate the two. What caused the rift in the marriage? The vagaries in milk prices? The endless work of the barn? The inability ever to leave it, since milking must be done twice a day, without fail?

As I approach the barnyard, the milkers are resting on the frosted ground, crystals collecting on their furred faces. Jay appears first, dressed, as always, in a heavy padded jacket, brimmed cap, and waterproof boots. The milkers rise up with effort at his entrance, like overweight people who have been lying down too long. Once on their feet, they move quickly, a few cows slipping on the cement walkway—ladies whose high heels have given way. They file into the barn, each cow seeming to recognize her station.

The barn is cold until the cows enter: their bodies heat the low-ceilinged room. I feel as if I've walked into a near-tropical atmosphere, humid with their yeasty breath, sweet from the scent of silage. I proceed down the center aisle, a kind of rectal gantlet, to the strains of Johnny Cash: "I fell into a burning ring of fire. I went down down down and the flames burned higher." Somehow the lavalike expulsions and torrents of excretion are not unpleasant. The end products recall their source—sweet grass, alfalfa, and hay.

Chester appears now; for the last time, I watch him milk. I am given a push broom to shove feed under each cow's front position. Chester moves along beside me, flipping a scooper. Jay carries the milking machines, networks of ganglia which resemble mechanical octopuses, and runs down the rows of cows, daubing at their teats with Bovadine teat dip, an antiseptic. At last, the machines are attached, with suction clamps that grip the nipples like so many metallic fingers. I can almost

read relief in the cows' eyes as they feel the draw on their insides, and the barn begins to pulse with milk.

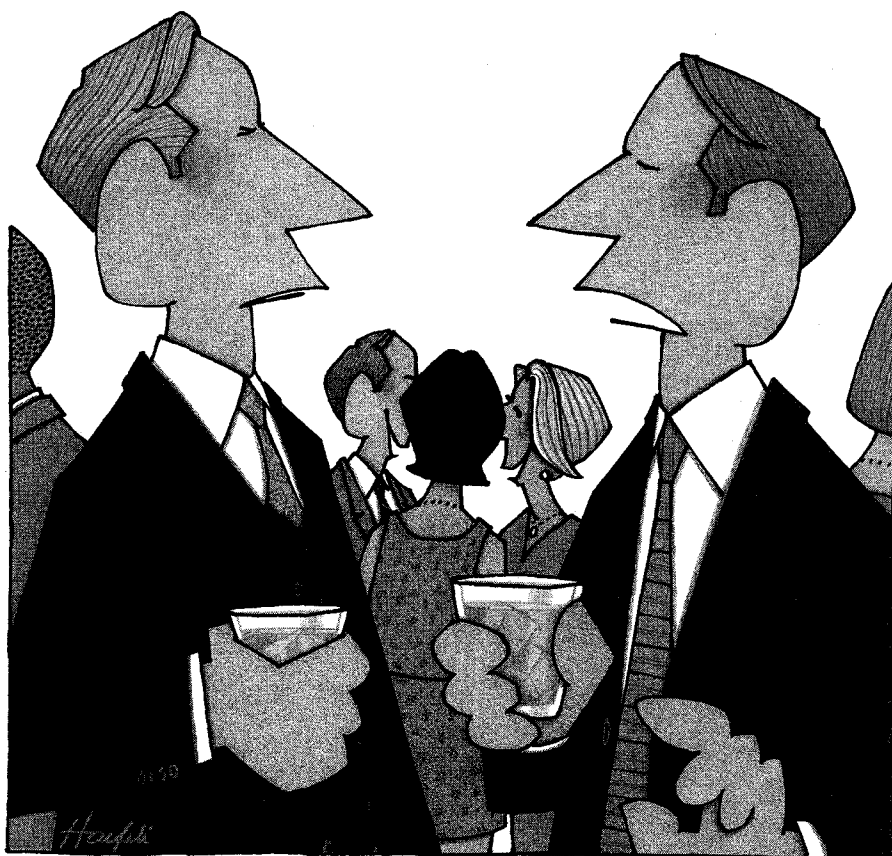
It takes two and a half hours to rotate the four milking machines among the eighty cows. All the while, Chester and I dish feed, spread hay, and, later, work a hoe-like manure scraper. Essentially, we clean the barn so that in a few hours the cows can reenter and let it rip all over again. Because it's a Sunday, Chester announces that we will take a rest. It's 10:30 A.M., and I feel I've worked a day. Chester has yet to have breakfast. As we walk together to his cottage, where Bonnie is waiting with coffee, bagels, and her hot-pepper jelly, I think of him and his son, of this routine, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. The farmers say, "It's the repetition that gets you." And yet, later, as I set to work again, pushing the broom in the barn, I wonder, Is this worse than other work? I know about the jobs available to men in this area: tractor repairman, tool salesman, prison guard. I think of my own work struggles, and of the work my mother did—an office job "downtown," a jammed hourlong subway ride each way. One of Chester's grandsons quit the farm to work "out-

side," and then returned to the barn. One afternoon, while he worked the push broom, I asked him why. "Here," he said, "the shit is only shit."

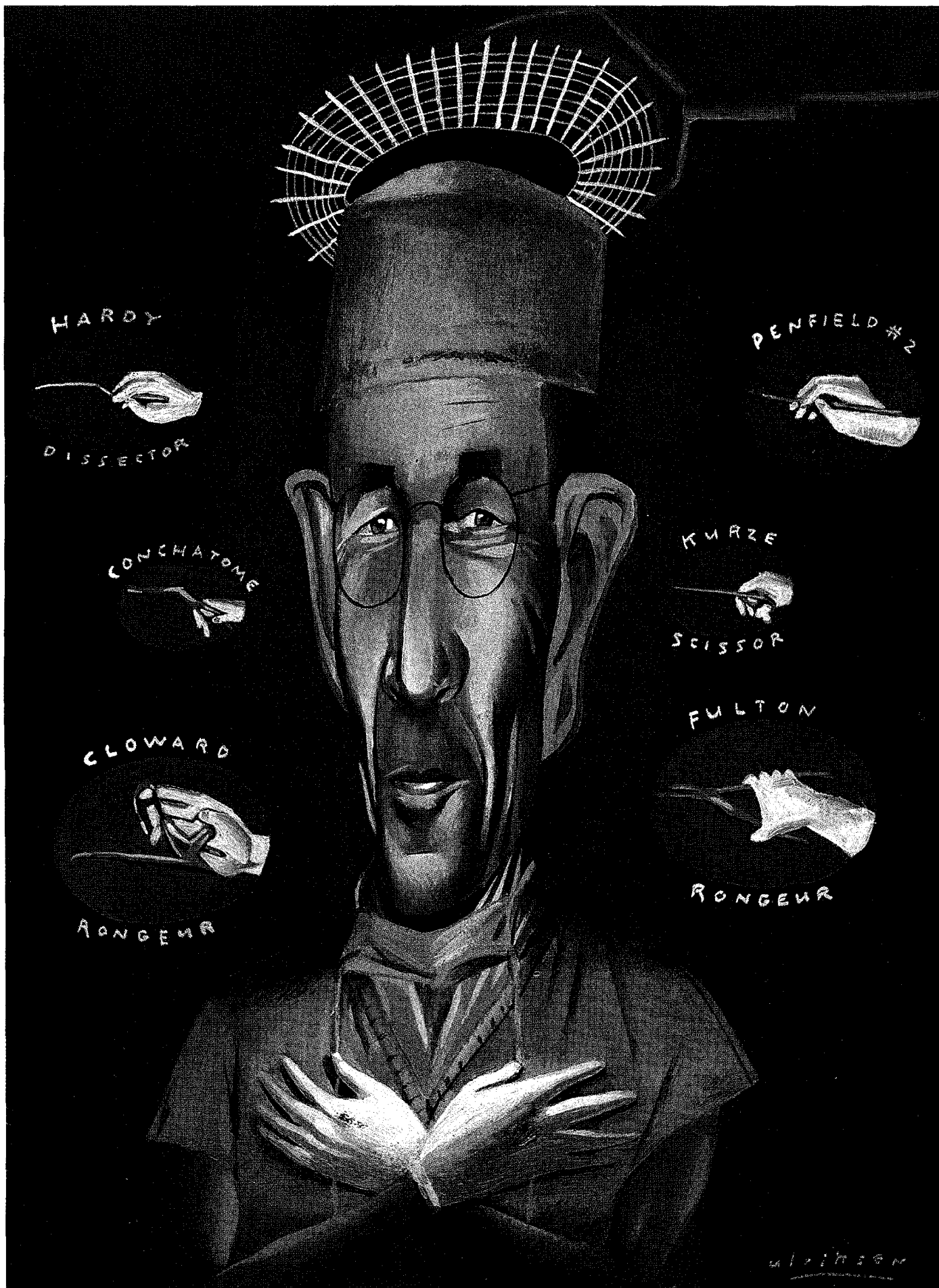
Chester tells me that the cows are going to be shipped north, to a dairy in Vermont, close to the Canadian border. For them, it is not a tragic end but a change of venue—cows being much too valuable to destroy.

On the day of their departure, a few weeks later, I tried to put them out of my mind as I went about my morning errands. But two miles from the farm, as I came out of the town bank, at the rim of the major highway, I could have sworn I heard a moo. I must really be undone, I thought. Then I looked up and saw it—the cow-transport truck, poised at the red light next to the bank. From both levels, black-and-white-and-pink noses appeared.

I couldn't help but laugh, and, by chance, I found myself following them in my car. We were all heading north. I drove behind them for as long as I could. In a few seconds, the details of the cows' noses and the shadows between the bars became invisible, and the truck streaked, blue and silver, up the thruway, like an ordinary truck on an ordinary day. ♦



"I understood each and every word you said but not the order in which they appeared."



Charlie Wilson speaks of his surgical prowess as something he doesn't fully understand. "It's sort of an invisible hand," he says.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE PHYSICAL GENIUS

What do Wayne Gretzky, Yo-Yo Ma, and a brain surgeon named Charlie Wilson have in common?

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

EARLY one recent morning, while the San Francisco fog was lifting from the surrounding hills, Charlie Wilson performed his two thousand nine hundred and eighty-seventh transsphenoidal resection of a pituitary tumor. The patient was a man in his sixties who had complained of impotence and obscured vision. Diagnostic imaging revealed a growth, eighteen millimetres in diameter, that had enveloped his pituitary gland and was compressing his optic nerve. He was anesthetized and covered in blue surgical drapes, and one of Wilson's neurosurgery residents—a tall, slender woman in her final year of training—"opened" the case, making a small incision in his upper gum, directly underneath his nose. She then tunneled back through his nasal passages until she reached the pituitary, creating a cavity several inches deep and about one and a half centimetres in diameter.

Wilson entered the operating room quickly, walking stiffly, bent slightly at the waist. He is sixty-nine—a small, wiry man with heavily muscled arms. His hair is cut very close to his scalp, so that, as residents over the years have joked, he might better empathize with the shaved heads of his patients. He is part Cherokee Indian and has high, broad cheekbones and large ears, which stick out at almost forty-five-degree angles. He was wearing Nike cross-trainers, and surgical scrubs marked with the logo of the medical center he has dominated for the past thirty years—Moffitt Hospital, at the University of California, San Francisco. When he was busiest, in the nineteen-eighties, he would routinely do seven or eight brain surgeries in a row, starting at dawn and ending at dusk, lining up patients in adjoining operating rooms and striding from one to the other like a conquering general. On this particular

day, he would do five, of which the transsphenoidal was the first, but the rituals would be the same. Wilson believes that neurosurgery is best conducted in silence, with a scrub nurse who can anticipate his every step, and a resident who does not have to be told what to do, only shown. There was no music in the O.R. To guard against unanticipated disturbances, the door was locked. Pagers were set to "buzz," not beep. The phone was put on "Do Not Disturb."

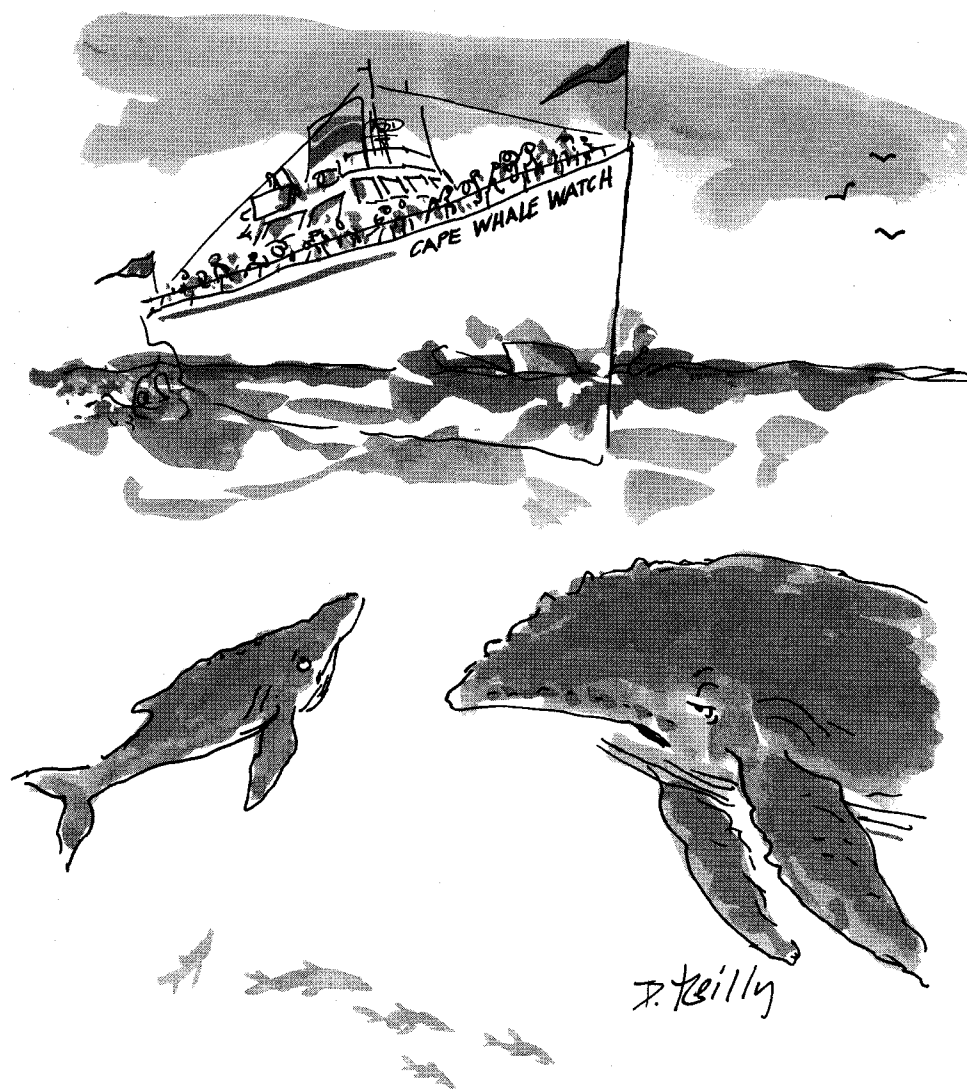
Wilson sat by the patient in what looked like a barber's chair, manipulating a surgical microscope with a foot pedal. In his left hand he wielded a tiny suction tube, which removed excess blood. In his right he held a series of instruments in steady alternation: Cloward elevator, Penfield No. 2, Cloward rongeur, Fulton rongeur, conchotome, Hardy dissector, Kurze scissors, and so on. He worked quickly, with no wasted motion. Through the microscope, the tumor looked like a piece of lobster flesh, white and fibrous. He removed the middle of it, exposing the pituitary underneath. Then he took a ring curette—a long instrument with a circular scalpel perpendicular to the handle—and ran it lightly across the surface of the gland, peeling the tumor away as he did so.

It was, he would say later, like running a squeegee across a windshield, except that in this case the windshield was a surgical field one centimetre in diameter, flanked on either side by the carotid arteries, the principal sources of blood to the brain. If Wilson were to wander too far to the right or to the left and nick either artery, the patient might, in the neurosurgical shorthand, "stroke." If he were to push too far to the rear, he might damage any number of critical nerves. If he were not to probe aggressively, though, he might

miss a bit of tumor and defeat the purpose of the procedure entirely. It was a delicate operation, which called for caution and confidence and the ability to distinguish between what was supposed to be there and what wasn't. Wilson never wavered. At one point, there was bleeding from the right side of the pituitary, which signalled to Wilson that a small piece of tumor was still just outside his field of vision, and so he gently slid the ring curette over, feeling with the instrument as if by his fingertips, navigating around the carotid, lifting out the remaining bit of tumor. In the hands of an ordinary neurosurgeon, the operation—down to that last bit of blindfolded acrobatics—might have taken several hours. It took Charlie Wilson twenty-five minutes.

Neurosurgery is generally thought to attract the most gifted and driven of medical-school graduates. Even in that rarefied world, however, there are surgeons who are superstars and surgeons who are merely very good. Charlie Wilson is one of the superstars. Those who have trained with him say that if you showed them a dozen videotapes of different neurosurgeons in action—with the camera focussed just on the hands of the surgeon and the movements of the instruments—they could pick Wilson out in an instant, the same way an old baseball hand could look at a dozen batters in silhouette and tell you which one was Willie Mays. Wilson has a distinctive fluidity and grace.

One of the most difficult of all neurosurgical procedures is aneurysm repair, where the surgeon sets out to seal, with a tiny titanium clip, a bulge in the side of an artery caused by the weakening of its wall. If the aneurysm bursts in the process—because the clip is applied incorrectly, or the surgeon inadvertently punctures one of the tributary vessels or doesn't see something critical on the un-



"They have no lives, so they watch us."

derside of the aneurysm—the patient stands a good chance of dying. Aneurysm repair is bomb disposal. Wilson made it look easy. "After he'd dissected the whole aneurysm out, and when he had control of all the feeding vessels, I'd see him grasp it and flip it back and forth, because he somehow *knew* that if it popped he would still be able to clip it," says Michon Morita, who trained with Wilson at U.C.S.F. in the early nineties and now practices in Honolulu. "Most people are afraid of aneurysms. He wasn't afraid of them at all. He was like a cat playing with a mouse."

THERE are thousands of people who have played in the National Hockey League over the years, but there has been only one Wayne Gretzky. Thousands of cellists play profes-

sionally all over the world, but very few will ever earn comparison with Yo-Yo Ma. People like Gretzky or Ma or Charlie Wilson all have an affinity for translating thought into action. They're what we might call physical geniuses. But what makes them so good at what they do?

The temptation is to treat physical genius in the same way that we treat intellectual genius—to think of it as something that can be ascribed to a single factor, a physical version of I.Q. When professional football coaches assess the year's crop of college prospects, they put them through drills designed to measure what they regard as athleticism: How high can you jump? How many pounds can you bench press? How fast can you sprint? The sum of the scores on these tests is

considered predictive of athletic performance, and every year some college player's stock shoots up before draft day because it is suddenly discovered that he can run, say, 4.4 seconds in the forty-yard dash as opposed to 4.6 seconds. This much seems like common sense. The puzzling thing about physical genius, however, is that the closer you look at it the less it can be described by such cut-and-dried measures of athleticism.

Consider, for example, Tony Gwynn, who has been one of the best hitters in baseball over the past fifteen years. We would call him extraordinarily coordinated, by which we mean that in the course of several hundred milliseconds he can execute a series of perfectly synchronized muscular actions—the rotation of the shoulder, the movement of the arms, the shift of the hips—and can regulate the outcome of those actions so that his bat hits the ball with exactly the desired degree of force. These are abilities governed by specific neurological mechanisms. Timing, for example, appears to be controlled by the cerebellum. Richard Ivry, a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, has looked at patients who suffered cerebellar damage as a result of a stroke. He had them pronounce

the sounds "bah," "pah," and "dah." The difference between the "b" sound and the "p" sound is primarily a matter of timing. "To make the 'b' sound, you put your lips together and as you open them you immediately vibrate the vocal chords," Ivry said. "For 'p' you open the lips thirty to forty milliseconds before the vocal cords vibrate." Stroke patients with cerebellar damage, Ivry found, make lots of "b"- "p" mistakes: "baby" comes out "paby." Their timing is off. But they don't have trouble with "p" and "d," because the timing of lips and vocal cords for those two sounds is exactly the same. The difference is simply in the configuration of your tongue. "You never hear them say 'dady' instead of 'baby,'" Ivry said.

Force regulation appears to be controlled by another area of the brain en-

tirely, the basal ganglia. "I like to think of the basal ganglia as a gate to the motor system," Ivry said, although he cautioned that the work on force regulation is still a good deal more speculative than the work on timing. "At any point in time, I have a few actions that I'm thinking about, and the basal ganglia are monitoring all the potential ones, then choosing one. The question is: How quickly does that gate open up?" He devised a study in which subjects were asked to press on a lever with their index finger over and over again, with the same degree of force each time. Patients with Parkinson's disease, which is a degenerative condition affecting the basal ganglia, had relatively little trouble with the timing of that movement, but they had terrible difficulty controlling the force of the tapping. At one moment they were pressing too hard, and the next they weren't pressing hard enough. Their "gate" wasn't working properly.

Stroke victims and Parkinson's patients, of course, are people who have actually suffered neurological impairment. But Ivry and Steven Keele, of the University of Oregon, suggest that in healthy people, too, there is probably a natural variation in the efficiency of these motor-control functions. They have done work on clumsy children, for example, that shows that what looks like a general lack of coordination can, in some cases, be broken down into either a basal-ganglia problem or a cerebellum problem. Clumsy kids are at one end of the coordination bell curve. "Maybe their neural connections or their branching isn't as well developed, or they don't have as many synaptic connections," Ivry suggests. And at the other end of the curve? That's where you find people like Tony Gwynn.

But being wonderfully coordinated isn't all there is to hitting. A ball thrown at eighty-nine miles per hour (which is a typical speed in the major leagues) takes roughly four hundred and sixty milliseconds to go from the pitcher's hand to home plate. Someone like Tony Gwynn, with all his finely tuned physiological hardware, takes about a hundred and sixty milliseconds to swing a bat. The decision about how to swing the bat, however, will take Gwynn between a hundred and ninety and four hundred and fifty millisec-

onds, depending on what the situation is and what he intends to do with the pitch. "Very good hitters base their decisions on past experience with certain pitchers, with the count, with the probabilities of certain types of pitches, with their own skills, and use very early cues in the pitcher's delivery to begin the swing," Janet Starkes, a professor of kinesiology at McMaster University, in Ontario, says.

What sets physical geniuses apart from other people, then, is not merely being able to do something but knowing what to do—their capacity to pick up on subtle patterns that others generally miss. This is what we mean when we say that great athletes have a "feel" for the game, or that they "see" the court or the field or the ice in a special way. Wayne Gretzky, in a 1981 game against the St. Louis Blues, stood behind the St. Louis goal, laid the puck across the blade of his stick, then bounced it off the back of the goalie in front of him and into the net. Gretzky's genius at that moment lay in seeing a scoring possibility where no one had seen one before. "People talk about skating, puck-handling, and shooting," Gretzky told an interviewer some years later, "but the whole sport is angles and caroms, forgetting the straight direction the puck is going, calculating where it will be diverted, factoring in all the interruptions." Neurosurgeons say that when the very best surgeons operate they always know where they are going, and they mean that the Charlie Wilsons of this world possess that same special feel—an ability to calculate the diversions and to factor in the interruptions when faced with a confusing mass of blood and tissue.

When Charlie Wilson came to U.C. San Francisco, in July of 1968, his first case concerned a woman who had just had a pituitary operation. The previous surgeon had done the one thing that surgeons are not supposed to do in pituitary surgery—tear one of the carotid arteries. Wilson was so dis-

mayed by the outcome that he resolved he would teach himself how to do the transsphenoidal, which was then a relatively uncommon procedure. He carefully read the medical literature. He practiced on a few cadavers. He called a friend in Los Angeles who was an expert at the procedure, and had him come to San Francisco and perform two operations while Wilson watched. He flew to Paris to observe Gerard Guiot, who was one of the great transsphenoidal surgeons at the time. Then he flew home. It was the equivalent of someone preparing for a major-league tryout by watching the Yankees on television and hitting balls in an amusement-arcade batting cage. "Charlie went slowly," recalls Ernest Bates, a Bay-area neurosurgeon who scrubbed with Wilson on his first transsphenoidal, "but he knew the anatomy and, boom, he was there. I thought, My God, this was the first? You'd have thought he had done a hundred. Charlie has a skill that the rest of us just don't have."

This is the hard part about understanding physical genius, because the source of that special skill—that "feel"—is still something of a mystery. "Sometimes during the course of an operation, there'll be several possible ways of doing something, and I'll size them up and, without having any conscious reason, I'll just do one of them," Wilson told me. He speaks with a soft, slow drawl, a remnant of Neosho, Missouri, the little town where he grew up, and where his father was a pharmacist, who kept his store open from 7 A.M. to 11 P.M., seven days a week. Wilson has a plainspoken, unpretentious quality. When he talks about his extraordinary success as a surgeon, he gives the impression that he is talking about some abstract trait that he is neither responsible for nor completely able to understand. "It's sort of an invisible hand," he went on. "It begins almost to seem mystical. Sometimes a resident asks, 'Why did you do that?' and I say"—here Wilson gave a little shrug—"Well, it just seemed like the right thing."



THERE is a neurosurgeon at Columbia Presbyterian Center, in Manhattan, by the name of Don Quest, who served two tours in Vietnam flying A-1s off the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. Quest

sounds like the kind of person who bungee jumps on the weekend and has personalized license plates that read "Ace." In fact, he is a thoughtful, dapper man with a carefully trimmed mustache, who plays the trombone in his spare time and quite cheerfully describes himself as compulsive. "When I read the *New York Times*, I don't speed-read it," Quest told me. "I read it carefully. I read everything. It drives my wife crazy." He was wearing a spotless physician's coat and a bow tie. "When I'm reading a novel—and there are so many novels I want to read—even if it's not very good I can't throw it away. I stick with it. It's quite frustrating, because I don't really have time for garbage." Quest talked about what it was like to repair a particularly tricky aneurysm compared to what it was like to land at night in rough seas and a heavy fog when you're running out of fuel and the lights are off on the carrier's landing strip, because the skies are full of enemy aircraft. "I think they are similar," he said, after some thought, and what he meant was that they were both exercises in a certain kind of exhaustive and meticulous preparation. "There is a checklist, before you take off, and this was drilled into us," Quest said. "It's on the dashboard with all the things you need to do. People forget to put the hook down, and you can't land on an aircraft carrier if the hook isn't down. Or they don't put the wheels down. One of my friends, my roommate, landed at night on the aircraft carrier with the wheels up. Thank God, the hook caught, because his engine stopped. He would have gone in the water." Quest did not seem like the kind of person who would forget to put the wheels down. "Some people are much more compulsive than others, and it shows," he went on to say. "It shows in how well they do their landing on the aircraft carrier, how many times they screw up, or are on the wrong radio frequency, or get lost, or their ordinances aren't accurate in terms of dropping a bomb. The ones who are the best are the ones who are always very careful."

Quest isn't saying that fine motor ability is irrelevant. One would expect him to perform extremely well on tests of the sort Ivry and Keele might devise. And, like Tony Gwynn, he's probably an adept and swift decision maker.

But these abilities, Quest is saying, are of little use if you don't have the right sort of personality. Charles Bosk, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania, once conducted a set of interviews with young doctors who had either resigned or been fired from neurosurgery-training programs, in an effort to figure out what separated the unsuccessful surgeons from their successful counterparts. He concluded that, far more than technical skills or intelligence, what was necessary for success was the sort of attitude that Quest has—a practical-minded obsession with the possibility and the consequences of failure. "When I interviewed the surgeons who were fired, I used to leave the interview shaking," Bosk said. "I would hear these horrible stories about what they did wrong, but the thing was that they didn't *know* that what they did was wrong. In my interviewing, I began to develop what I thought was an indicator of whether someone was going to be a good surgeon or not. It was a couple of simple questions: Have you ever made a mistake? And, if so, what was your worst mistake? The people who said, 'Gee, I haven't really had one,' or, 'I've had a couple of bad outcomes but they were due to things outside my control'—invariably those were the worst candidates. And the residents who said, 'I make mistakes all the time. There was this horrible thing that happened just yesterday and here's what it was.' They were the best. They had the ability to rethink everything that they'd done and imagine how they might have done it differently."

What this attitude drives you to do is practice over and over again, until even the smallest imperfections are ironed out. After doing poorly in a tournament just prior to this year's Wimbledon, Greg Rusedski, who is one of the top tennis players in the world, told reporters that he was going home to hit a thousand practice serves. One of the things that set Rusedski apart from lesser players, in other words, is that he is the kind of person who is willing to stand out in the summer sun, repeating the same physical movement again and again, in single-minded pursuit of some fractional improvement in his performance. Wayne Gretzky was the same way. He would frequently stay behind after

practice, long after everyone had left, flipping pucks to a specific spot in the crease, or aiming shot after shot at the crossbar or the goal post.

And Charlie Wilson? In his first few years as a professor at U.C.S.F., he would disappear at the end of the day into a special laboratory to practice his craft on rats: isolating, cutting, and then sewing up their tiny blood vessels, and sometimes operating on a single rat two or three times. He would construct an artificial aneurysm using a vein graft on the side of a rat artery, then manipulate the aneurysm the same way he would in a human being, toughening its base with a gentle coagulating current—and return two or three days later to see how successful his work had been. Wilson sees surgery as akin to a military campaign. Training with him is like boot camp. He goes to bed somewhere around eleven at night and rises at 4:30 A.M. For years, he ran upward of eighty miles a week, competing in marathons and hundred-mile ultra-marathons. He quit only after he had a hip replacement and two knee surgeries and found himself operating in a cast. Then he

HAIL, CESARIA

Whenever the great singer Cesaria Evora performs, she keeps a small table onstage, at which she rests and smokes while her band continues to burn. Evora specializes in languor, and she takes frequent breaks during her shows, a side effect, perhaps, of the long distance she has travelled from her native Cape Verde. Though she's referred to as the Barefoot Diva—it's true, she doesn't wear shoes—the only diva behavior she exhibits is outright hauteur. She moves slowly, sings even more slowly, and rarely deigns to smile—but her voice is so stately and evocative that anything more would be superfluous. On her new release, "Café Atlantico" (RCA/Victor), out in August, Evora continues to export the world-weary power of morna, a back-porch brand of Afro-Portuguese blues that recalls the tropical despair of the Buena Vista Social Club, except, of course, that she sings in Portuguese—not that anyone in the world would need a translator.

Photograph by William Klein



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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took up rowing. On his days in the operating room, at the height of his career, Wilson would run his morning ten or twelve miles, conduct medical rounds, operate steadily until six or seven in the evening, and, in between, see patients, attend meetings, and work on what now totals six hundred academic articles. One of his former residents says, with a laugh, that when he was on Wilson's rotation he developed a persistent spasm of his upper eyelid and it did not go away until he moved on to train with someone else. Julian Hoff, the chairman of neurosurgery at the University of Michigan and a longtime friend of Wilson's, says, "The way he would communicate with people in the office is that he would have a little piece of paper and he would put your name with an arrow next to it, and two words saying what he wanted you to do." Once, when a new head of nursing at U.C.S.F. wanted to start rotating nursing teams in neurosurgery, instead of letting Wilson work with the same team every day, he stopped operating for a week in protest. New nurses, he explained, would mean more mistakes—not fatal mistakes but irregularities in the flow of his operating room, such as someone's handing him the wrong instrument, or handing him an instrument with the blade up instead of down, or even just a certain hesitation, because to Wilson the perfect operation requires a particular grace

and rhythm. "In every way, it is analogous to the routine of a concert pianist," he says. "If you were going to do a concert and you didn't practice for a week, someone would notice that, just as I notice if one of my scrub nurses has been off for a week. There is that fraction-of-a-second difference in the way she reacts."

"Wilson has a certain way of positioning the arm of the retractor blade"—an instrument used to hold brain tissue in place—"so that the back end of the retractor doesn't stick up at all and he won't accidentally bump into it," Michon Morita told me. "Every once in a while, though, I'd see him when he didn't quite put it in the position he wanted to, and bumped it, which caused a little bit of hemorrhage on the brain surface. It wasn't harming the patient, and it was nothing he couldn't handle. But I'd hear 'That was stupid,' and I'd immediately ask myself, What did I do wrong? Then I'd realize he was chastising himself. Most people would say that if there was no harm done to the patient it was no big deal. But he wants to be perfect in everything, and when that perfection is broken he gets frustrated."

THIS kind of obsessive preparation does two things. It creates consistency. Practice is what enables Greg Rusedski to hit a serve at a hundred and twenty-five miles per hour again

and again. It's what enables a pianist to play Chopin's double-thirds Étude at full speed, striking every key with precisely calibrated force. More important, practice changes the way a task is perceived. A chess master, for example, can look at a game in progress for a few seconds and then perfectly reconstruct that same position on a blank chessboard. That's not because chess masters have great memories (they don't have the same knack when faced with a random arrangement of pieces) but because hours and hours of chess playing have enabled them to do what psychologists call "chunking." Chunking is based on the fact that we store familiar sequences—like our telephone number or our bank-machine password—in long-term memory as a single unit, or chunk. If I told you a number you'd never heard before, though, you would be able to store it only in short-term memory, one digit at a time, and if I asked you to repeat it back to me you might be able to remember only a few of those digits—maybe the first two or the last three. By contrast, when the chess masters see the board from a real game, they are able to break the board down into a handful of chunks—two or three clusters of pieces in positions that they have encountered before.

In "The Game of Our Lives," a classic account of the 1980-81 season of the Edmonton Oilers hockey team, Peter Gzowski argues that one of the principal explanations for the particular genius of Wayne Gretzky was that he was hockey's greatest chunker. Gretzky, who holds nearly every scoring record in professional hockey, baffled many observers because he seemed to reverse the normal laws of hockey. Most great offensive players prefer to keep the rest of the action on the ice behind them—to try to make the act of scoring be just about themselves and the goalie. Gretzky liked to keep the action in front of him. He would set up by the side of the rink, or behind the opposing team's net, so that the eleven other players on the ice were in full view, and then slide the perfect pass to the perfect spot. He made hockey look easy, even as he was playing in a way that made it more complicated. Gzowski says that Gretzky could do that because, like master chess players, he wasn't seeing all eleven other players individually; he was see-

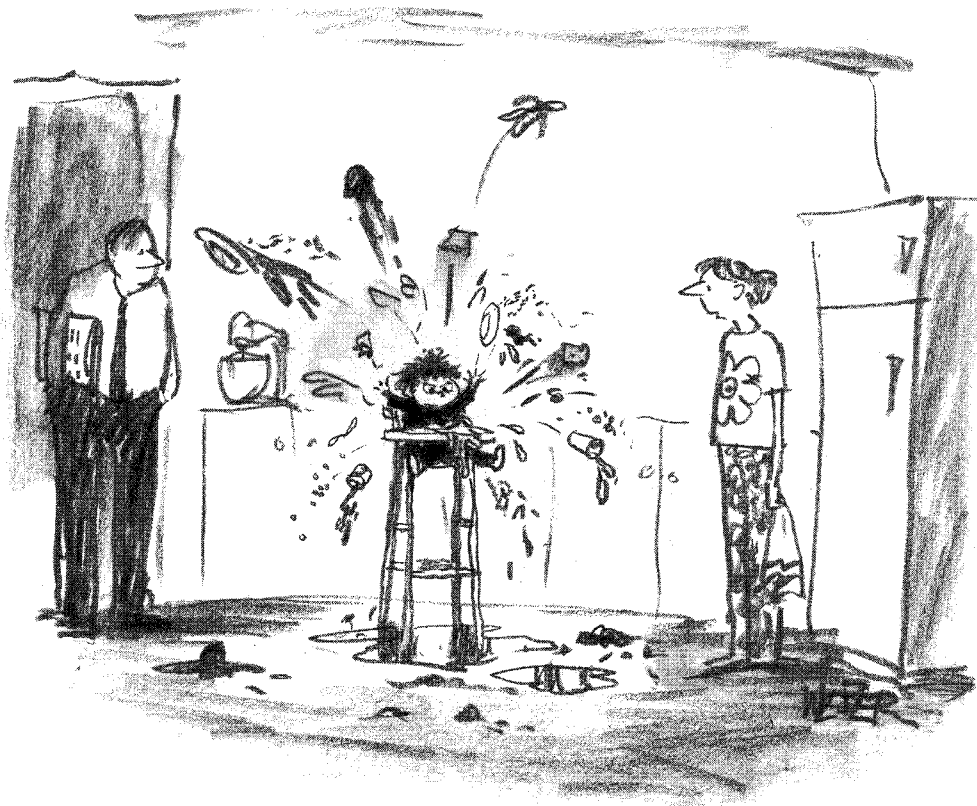


MANKOFF

"Look, I can't promise I'll change, but I can promise I'll pretend to change."

ing only chunks. Here is Gzowski's conclusion after talking to Gretzky about a game he once played against the Montreal Canadiens. It could as easily serve as an explanation for Charlie Wilson's twenty-five-minute transphenoidal resection:

What Gretzky perceives on a hockey rink is, in a curious way, more simple than what a less accomplished player perceives. He sees not so much a set of moving players as a number of situations. . . . Moving in on the Montreal blueline, as he was able to recall while he watched a videotape of himself, he was aware of the position of all the other players on the ice. The pattern they formed was, to him, one fact, and he reacted to that fact. When he sends a pass to the rest of us appears an empty space on the ice, and when a teammate magically appears in that space to collect the puck, he has in reality simply summoned up from his bank account of knowledge the fact that in a particular situation, someone is likely to be in a particular spot, and if he is not there now he will be there presently.



"He has some food issues."

FOR a time, early in his career, Charlie Wilson became obsessed with tennis. He took lessons from Rod Laver. He joined three tennis clubs, so he could be absolutely assured of having court time whenever he wanted it. He had his own ball machine, and would go out early in the morning, before anyone else was on the court, and hit bucket after bucket of balls. He was in great shape. He could play any number of sets. He had a serve that he says was a beauty, a great backhand, and—as he put it—"a very expensive" forehand. But Wilson never turned into the kind of tennis player he wanted to be. Julian Hoff recalls, "There was this guy in the neurosurgery department, John Adams, who was a former tennis champion. An older guy. Arthritic. Rickety. Looked terrible. Charlie decided that he had to beat John Adams. But he never could. It drove him crazy."

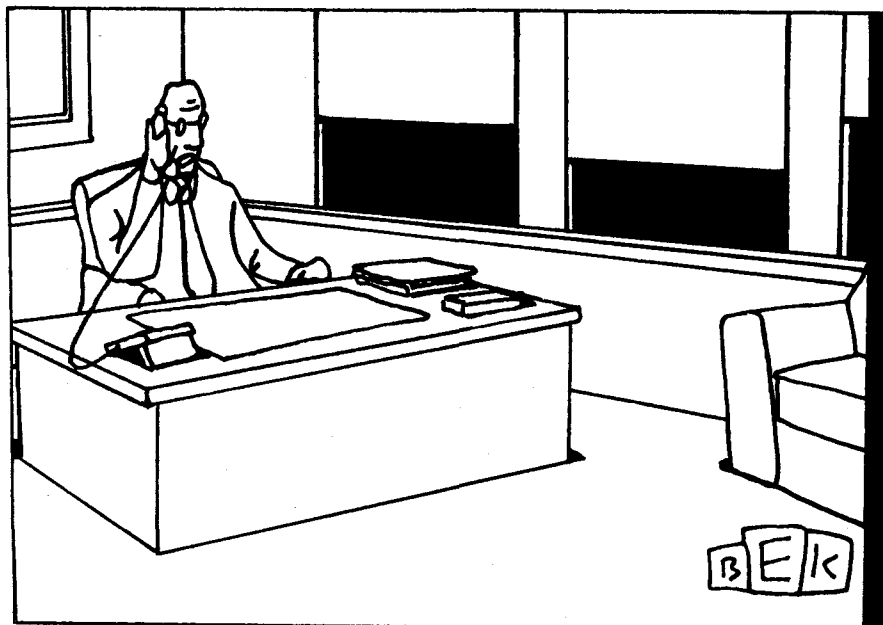
It is easy to understand Wilson's frustration. He was a superb athlete—as a teen-ager he had been an excellent basketball player, and he attended college on a football scholarship—and a surgeon who could make life-or-death decisions in a split second. And yet, for all his focus and determination, he could not respond effectively to an old

man shuffling toward the ball twenty feet across the net from him. "A good player knows where the ball is going," Wilson says. "He anticipates it. He is there. I just wasn't." What Wilson is describing is a failure not of skill or of resolve but of the least understood element of physical genius—imagination. For some reason, he could not make the game come alive in his mind.

When psychologists study people who are expert at motor tasks, they find that almost all of them use their imaginations in a very particular and sophisticated way. Jack Nicklaus, for instance, has said that he has never taken a swing that he didn't first mentally rehearse, frame by frame. Yo-Yo Ma told me that he remembers riding on a bus, at the age of seven, and solving a difficult musical problem by visualizing himself playing the piece on the cello. Robert Spetzler, who trained with Wilson and is widely considered to be the heir to Wilson's mantle, says that when he gets into uncharted territory in an operation he feels himself transferring his mental image of what ought to happen onto the surgical field. Charlie Wilson talks about going running in

the morning and reviewing each of the day's operations in his head—visualizing the entire procedure and each potential outcome in advance. "It was a virtual rehearsal," he says, "so when I was actually doing the operation, it was as if I were doing it for the second time." Once, he says, he had finished a case and taken off his gloves and was walking down the hall away from the operating room when he suddenly stopped, because he realized that the tape he had been playing in his head didn't match the operation that had unfolded before his eyes. "I was correlating everything—what I saw, what I expected, what the X-rays said. And I just realized that I had not pursued one particular thing. So I turned around, scrubbed, and went back in, and, sure enough, there was a little remnant of tumor that was just around the corner. It would have been a disaster."

The Harvard University psychologist Stephen Kosslyn has shown that this power to visualize consists of at least four separate abilities, working in combination. The first is the ability to generate an image—to take something out of long-term memory and recon-



"I like things to be done my own particular way by someone other than me."

struct it on demand. The second is what he calls "image inspection," which is the ability to take that mental picture and draw inferences from it. The third is "image maintenance," the ability to hold that picture steady. And the fourth is "image transformation," which is the ability to take that image and manipulate it. If I asked you whether a frog had a tail, for example, you would summon up a picture of a frog from your long-term memory (image generation), hold it steady in your mind (image maintenance), rotate the frog around until you see his backside (image transformation), and then look to see if there was a tail there (image inspection). These four abilities are highly variable. Kosslyn once gave a group of people a list of thirteen tasks, each designed to test a different aspect of visualization, and the results were all over the map. You could be very good at generation and maintenance, for example, without being good at transformation, or you could be good at transformation without necessarily being adept at inspection and maintenance. Some of the correlations, in fact, were negative, meaning that sometimes being good at one of those four things meant that you were likely to be bad at another. Bennett Stein, a former chairman of neurosurgery at Columbia Presbyterian Center, says that one of

the reasons some neurosurgery residents fail in their training is that they are incapable of making the transition between the way a particular problem is depicted in an X-ray or an M.R.I., and how the problem looks when they encounter it in real life. These are people whose capacities for mental imaging simply do not match what's required for dealing with the complexities of brain surgery. Perhaps these people can generate an image but are unable to transform it in precisely the way that is necessary to be a great surgeon; or perhaps they can transform the image but they cannot maintain it. The same may have been true for Charlie Wilson and tennis. Somehow, his particular configuration of imaging abilities did not fit with the demands of the sport. When he stopped playing the game, he says, he didn't miss it, and that's not surprising. Tennis never quite got inside his head. Neurosurgery, of course, is another matter.

"Certain aneurysms at the base of the brain are surrounded by very important blood vessels and nerves, and the typical neurosurgeon will make that dissection with a set of micro-instruments that are curved, each with a blunt end," Craig Yorke, who trained with Wilson and now practices neurosurgery in Topeka, recalls. "The neurosurgeon will sneak up on them. Charlie

would call for a No. 11 blade, which is a thin, very low-profile scalpel, and would just cut down to where the aneurysm was. He would be there in a quarter of the time." The speed and the audacity of Wilson's maneuvers, Yorke said, would sometimes leave him breathless. "Do you know about Gestalt psychology?" he continued. "If I look at a particular field—tumor or aneurysm—I will see the gestalt after I've worked on it for a little while. He would just glance at it and see it. It's a conceptual, a spatial thing. His use of the No. 11 blade depended on his ability to construct a gestalt of the surgical field first. If just anybody had held up the eleven blade in that way it might have been a catastrophe. He could do it because he had the picture of the whole anatomy in his head when he picked up the instrument."

IF you think of physical genius as a pyramid, with, at the bottom, the raw components of coordination, and, above that, the practice that perfects those particular movements, then this faculty of imagination is the top layer. This is what separates the physical genius from those who are merely very good. Michael Jordan and Karl Malone, his longtime rival, did not differ so much in their athletic ability or in how obsessively they practiced. The difference between them is that Jordan could always generate a million different scenarios by which his team could win, some of which were chunks stored in long-term memory, others of which were flights of fancy that came to him, figuratively and literally, in midair. Jordan twice won championships in the face of unexpected adversity: once, a case of the flu, and, the second time, a back injury to his teammate Scottie Pippen, and he seemed to thrive on these obstacles, in a way Karl Malone never could.

Yo-Yo Ma says that only once, early in his career, did he try for a technically perfect performance. "I was seventeen," he told me. "I spent a year working on it. I was playing a Brahms sonata at the 92nd Street Y. I remember working really hard at it, and in the middle of the performance I thought, I'm bored. It would have been nothing for me to get up from the stage and walk away. That's when I decided I would always opt for

expression over perfection." It isn't that Ma doesn't achieve perfection; it's that he finds striving for perfection to be banal. He says that he sometimes welcomes it when he breaks a string, because that is precisely the kind of thing (like illness or an injury to a teammate) that you cannot prepare for—that you haven't chunked and, like some robot, stored neatly in long-term memory. The most successful performers improvise. They create, in Ma's words, "something living." Ma says he spends ninety per cent of his time "looking at the score, figuring it out—who's saying this, who wrote this and why," letting his mind wander, and only ten per cent on the instrument itself. Like Jordan, his genius originates principally in his imagination. If he spent less time dreaming and more time playing, he would be Karl Malone.

Here is the source of the physical genius's motivation. After all, what is this sensation—this feeling of having what you do fit perfectly into the dimensions of your imagination—but the purest form of pleasure? Tony Gwynn and Wayne Gretzky and Charlie Wilson and all the other physical geniuses are driven to greatness because they have found something so compelling that they cannot put it aside. Perhaps this explains why a great many top neurosurgeons are also highly musical. Robert Spetzler, Wilson's protégé, seriously considered a career as a concert pianist. Craig Yorke made his debut as a violinist at sixteen with the Boston Pops. Quest, of course, plays the trombone. As for Wilson, he is a cellist and, when he was a student in New Orleans, he would play jazz piano at Pat O'Brien's, in the French Quarter. Music is one of the few vocations that offer a kind of sensory and cognitive immersion similar to surgery: the engagement of hand and eye, the challenge of sustained performance, the combination of mind and motion—all of it animated by the full force of the imagination. Once, in an E-mail describing his special training sessions on rats, Wilson wrote that he worked on them for two years and "then trailed off when I finally figured that I was doing it for fun, not for practice." For fun! When someone chooses to end a twelve-hour day alone in a laboratory, inducing aneurysms in the arteries of

rats, we might call that behavior obsessive. But that is an uncharitable word. A better explanation is that, for some mysterious and wonderful reason, Wilson finds the act of surgery irresistible, in the way that musicians find pleasure in the sounds they produce on their instruments, or in the way Tony Gwynn gets a thrill every time he strokes a ball cleanly through the infield. Before he was two years old, it is said, Wayne Gretzky watched hockey games on television, enraptured, and slid his stockinged feet on the linoleum in imitation of the players, then cried when the game was over, because he could not understand how something so sublime should have to come to an end. This was long before Gretzky was any good at the game itself, or was skilled in any of its aspects, or could create even the smallest of chunks. But what he had was what the physical genius must have before any of the other layers of expertise fall into place: he had stumbled onto the one thing that, on some profound aesthetic level, made him happy.

Charlie Wilson says that only once in his career has he allowed himself to become emotionally attached to a patient—attached to the point where the patient's death felt like that of a family member. "It was this beautiful girl who had a spinal tumor," he told me. "She was always bringing me cookies. It was a malignant tumor. She became a paraplegic, and then she got

married." Wilson was talking softly and slowly. "It just tore me up. I couldn't help myself. I remember operating on her and crying, right there in the O.R." Charlie Wilson is a man who, when he operates, does not permit music or extraneous talking or the noise of beepers or phones, who is attuned to even the slightest hesitation on the part of his scrub nurse, who admits, in his entire life, to just one day of depression, and who has the audacity and the control to take a No. 11 blade and slice down—just like that—to the basilar artery. But she was young, and it was tragic, and there was nothing he could do, and he has a daughter, too, so perhaps it touched a chord. He was sitting, as he talked, in his office at Moffitt Hospital with his Nike cross-trainers and surgical scrubs, thinking back to a moment when all certitude and composure escaped him. His performance on the day he operated on the girl's spinal tumor must have been compromised by his grief, he admitted. But what did it matter? This was not a procedure that required great judgment or technical mastery. "It was an ugly operation," he said, pronouncing the word "ugly" with a special distaste. "Maybe that was part of it." Of course, it was. Charlie Wilson is one of the world's great neurosurgeons because he can find some beauty in what he does—even in the midst of terrible illness. There was nothing beautiful there. "This lovely, lovely girl." He looked away. "Such a heart." ♦





FICTION
VINS FINS

BY ETHAN CANIN

THE autumn I was seventeen, Richard Nixon made a visit to our town, at the western edge of Cape Cod, and I went to see him with my father, who thought the President of the United States would weather Watergate like any other storm, and with my mother, who was waiting for him to fall. This was in 1973. In June of the year before, five men had been caught behind a locked door at the Democratic National Committee headquarters, in the Watergate Hotel; in September, Spiro Agnew claimed the incident was a setup; in October, the *Washington Post* said it had actually been controlled and paid for by the Attorney General. In November, my father sold a French restaurant near Plymouth, Massachusetts, and moved my mother and me fifteen miles south, onto the wide, landward edge of Cape Cod, at about the same time that Nixon himself began drawing his own guard in around him.

For most of my life my father had been opening and closing French bistros in New England, starting in Manchester, New Hampshire, and moving us south and east every year or so, ahead of a string of break-evens and failures and a few flamboyant successes that left him flush with money and hope. Even if the restaurants were profitable, he closed them—he knew that almost all of them would fail eventually—selling the checkered-tablecloth establishments to Canadian families and the white-tablecloth ones to the South Boston investors who followed him like hyenas in worsted suits. My father made money and lost money more or less evenly over the course of his life, but in the end he was more afraid of dying penniless, he once told me, than he was hopeful of getting rich. Every businessman has a flaw, he used to say, and every business is doomed. Timing was everything.

My father was a stern man of constant pedagogy, but restless, and in middle age he grew to possess a stormy temperament that combined with his headlong optimism in a way that made him very persuasive to an adolescent boy. From the age of eleven I had been the dishwasher in his restaurants. He had taught me to work hard, to open every door, to move on without fear. He was the son of a diemaker for

BERNARD PICCOLI DETAIL FROM "INITIATIVE" 110661/AMETIS IMAGES

Mid-Continental Electric Motor, in Dearborn, Michigan, and unambivalently about what he wanted. There was money in America; it was a few miles east of us and a few months down the road. That's where we were going.

The new restaurant he opened in Highamsett was called Chez Jacques—after his own name, Jack—and in keeping with what he thought were going to be flush times ahead he decided the cuisine would be *grande*, in the style of the great chef Georges-Auguste Escoffier, rather than *nouvelle*, the trend being promoted by my father's rivals. Chez Jacques was only fifteen miles away from his previous restaurant, but those fifteen miles were in the direction of Hyannis, and he felt that they would make a difference. It was still another twenty to where the real money began, but he calculated that the wealthy would drive a half hour and he would keep his rent down.

I was seventeen and had not yet come to my rebellion, caught up as I was in a bookishness and sarcasm that arose, I think, from moving so often. At least I could stay at Cape West High School, where I had been enrolled for two entire years. At Chez Jacques, I once again washed dishes. I loaded and unloaded the gray steel Hobart sterilizer that spewed a cloud of steam when I opened the door, rotten-smelling but sweet, the way all cooking had smelled to me for some time now. I washed the pots with a high-pressure spray hose that hung from a sliding trapeze above the sink. The dishes and the glasses—brandy snifters, wide-lipped stemware for red wine and narrow-lipped for white, water tumblers with their prismatic edges—all of it was thicker than what one found in people's homes. Waiters dropped plates, diners chipped wineglasses. My father had opened twelve restaurants in his career: this was business.

MY mother was French. My father had met her in Paris, where he stopped on his way back from Korea, lucky and bewildered to be alive, having just lived through a parachute bailout from his F-86 fighter; in those days after his war escape, the city must have been a dream to him—and in the midst of that dream, in a charcuterie in the Twelfth

Arrondissement, he found my mother. She was eighteen and it was spring. The tulips were bursting in the Tuileries. My father had seen the face of death and now was spending nights dancing with a girl in a cotton chemise who crossed her legs to drag on a cigarette. He brought her back to the States. This was 1953. I have pictures: she is like a tulip herself, her face always turned to the sun. And he is next to her, holding her by the arm, the waist, the thin loop of her belt. In his face the plane is going down, again and again.

She was a great beauty and possessed the quality of French motherhood that has inspired any number of films; when my father's friends sat at our kitchen table I watched them watch her. Her Frenchness was the defining fact of my father's life because it put her just slightly out of his reach, a fact that seemed to both infuriate him and drive his reckless hopefulness. I believe he learned to cook French food, for example, because he feared that if *he* didn't someone else would, some Frenchman with a natural claim to the heart that my father wooed like an eager and jealous outsider.

She had been the hostess in every one of his establishments, but when we moved to the Cape she found herself a job at the Highamsett town library instead. I don't know whether this was anything more than coincidence; a librarian had moved just before we arrived, and my mother decided to apply for the position—probably because, although not an educated woman, she knew that her French vowels gave the impression of culture.

To replace my mother, my father hired a hostess named Marguerite. She was Spanish instead of French and ten years younger than my mother; at the restaurant she wore white cotton blouses embroidered with colored beads around the neckline. When she came through the swinging doors into the kitchen, the ventilator fans sent the dark folds of her skirt swathing around her legs. She was comfortable with the patrons but not with me, which was not much of a problem in a restaurant like my father's, because he did not like to share the kitchen with anybody but the prep chef, if there was one, and the dishwasher.

He did not share it with the waiters, who in all his establishments were considered to be of a lower sort. When their orders were up they glided into the kitchen, picked up their dishes from under the hot light, muttered "*Porte*," and then backed through the doors into the dining room. The waiters at Chez Jacques were two Frenchmen, Claude and Henri, both in their late thirties, sad professional restaurant help who had worked in New York and knew to stay out of the kitchen until their orders were up. They did things the way my father wanted. When asked to recommend a dish they suggested the sole Duglérée, not the most expensive item on the menu—which would have produced the best tip—but the one on which my father's margin was the largest. If one of them allowed an *estouffade de bœuf* or a *feuilleté de saumon* to sit too long my father would greet him by dropping a dollop of grease onto the rim of the pan he kept on the rear burner; the gesture was both restrained and threatening, the grease flaring up chest-high and then sinking; it made him look authoritative—like a French chef on the cover of a cookbook—and at the same time diabolical. He didn't care if his employees disliked him.

My mother had always stayed out of the kitchen, but the first day Marguerite worked she came back a dozen times during her shift, swinging open the double doors and standing between them with her skirt clinging to her legs. I don't know what she was doing there, but my father did not ask her to leave. Instead, he began whistling, and in a moment she joined him in a tune I didn't recognize. He smiled slightly, stirring his pot. When she did leave, finally, turning on her heel, I watched his eyes. He must have seen me, because as soon as the door swung closed he winked. I was supposed to wink back, although I could not help thinking at that moment of my mother. I tried to picture her at the library—was a similar thing happening there? My father stood in front of the stove, his hair net pulled down over his high forehead, smiling at me with an unlit cigarette dangling from his lips. He did not have sympathy for anyone, really.

That is not to say he was unlikable.

Rather, it was understood in our family that his moodiness was an expression of the Gallic sensibility. He was tall and thin, an unusual build in his profession, and possessed a dark brow and a flat, imperial forehead that made him look too refined for a chef. He looked like an actor or one of the Boston financiers who ate at his restaurants. On their better days, my mother called him Handsome.

Those days had grown less frequent since our move. I, of course, will never truly know anything of their lives. I know only what I saw. That spring after we'd left the broad mainland of Massachusetts for the dry thistle of the Cape, my mother began to make friends with the mailman.

It was the year of Wounded Knee, the Christmas Bombing, and *Roe v. Wade*, and the mailman had a master's degree in history from the University of Chicago. He was probably ten years younger than my mother and covered his route on foot instead of in the right-hand-drive jeep that was used on the rural routes of the Cape. My mother had befriended him soon after our move: her book-club box had arrived, and instead of leaving it in the mail bin by the road he'd carried it down the driveway to our house. Of course, he probably wanted to know what book

the librarian would buy. No doubt he hand-delivered quite a few books on the Cape, and no doubt he waited in quite a few kitchens to see what they were. But it wasn't often that a housewife opened a cardboard mailer and took out "Revolution in the Revolution," by Regis Debray.

What in God's name was my mother doing with that book? She was not a radical. I suppose all that it means is that she *could* have been, that, in contrast to my father, she was not completely immune to the forces of those times.

The following afternoon, when I came in to change for work, I found the mailman in our house again, standing inside our kitchen door drinking a glass of lemonade with my mother. He was tall, with an incompletely grown red beard and Lincolnesque features, although on him they seemed raw and oversized because he had the bearing of a disgruntled rebel and not of a President.

"I don't even know your name," my mother said to him.

"Olaf," he answered, nodding approvingly at me.

"As in King," said my mother.

He laughed. "As in mailman. Just Olaf the mailman."

"Olaf, this is Leon."

"As in Ponce de," I said.

"You're late for work," said my mother.

"As in Trotsky," said Olaf.

When I look back on those times, I realize that I had a sense that Olaf was going to change things for us, even that first day I met him. It was odd enough that he was in our house at all—he was not the kind of person my father approved of and, until then, not the kind I thought my mother did, either. He looked ill-fitting more than anything else, tall to the point of disproportion. I got to know him pretty well that year: he was not charismatic; he was small-time, awkward, stumbling in his speech and action, prone to misfiring and early tumult, like countless men I have since seen who were drifting down. But he walked up the sandy drive to our house at a time when our lives were shivery and frangible and when the country itself was on a precarious landing. My mother befriended him. My father watched him from the corner of his eye.

How can I describe myself in those days? For years I was one child with my mother, another with my father. I was caught in the pull of different gravities. On my mother's side was charm and graciousness and an eccentric originality, along with a conviction that, in the end, life wasn't such a serious business after all. My father could never overcome this. Through all the years of their marriage, he fought against his initial disadvantage—that he was an American flyboy enraptured by her aristocratic bearing. And at first by virtue of his tenacious grip on her, and then of his seriousness and discipline, and finally of the overpowering glumness that could descend on him like a storm cloud, he gradually gained strength in their dealings. But he could never truly overcome her insouciance. More than once their fights ended with her laughter, and I would come downstairs to find her with a glass of cognac, my father at the window, confusion and fear on his face, like a farm animal asked to read Balzac.

At school, where neither parent held sway over me, I became sarcastic. Perhaps this was my way of being true to both of them, of being both serious and not serious at the same time. My civics papers came back with notes: "Is this what you really believe, Leon?" I did not go out for sports, and although I played



"For a transcript of tonight's 'Hollywood Squares,' send two dollars and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to this address."

the cornet moderately well, I did not go out for band, either. Instead I became the band mascot. Sarcasm had infiltrated the Cape West band as well, and though our teams were officially called the Lion Hearts, they had also somehow assumed the second role of Gorillas. At football games I wore a gorilla suit and danced among the band formations. This appealed both to the sarcastic students and to the sincere ones, who cheered from the grandstands whenever I raised the hairy black arms over my head; and it appealed to me because it allowed me to be both vigorous and sardonic. The suit was rubberized on the interior and covered thickly with some type of manufactured fur, dyed black; the top of the head was a full seven feet above the ground, and I looked out at the shifting field through the banana-shaped brightness of the mouth.

On Friday nights after the games I brought the suit home with me. I sat in my room, listening halfheartedly to the radio or reading. I read books—it didn't matter what they were—and the newspaper, first page to last. This was just who I found myself to be. All the while the gorilla costume looked out at me from the closet door like my strange conscience. Though I wore it sarcastically, danced in it sarcastically, raised its arms to bring on the shouts of five hundred classmates sarcastically, I treated it with tender care in gratitude for the unusual distinction it had brought me in school. The lining emitted an unusual odor, a combination of glue and earth. After I wore the suit, I pulled the sleeves inside out and rinsed the rubberish interior with a sponge. With a long-toothed horse's comb I brushed the hairy legs, which at each game became encrusted with mud. The truth was I had no friends.

THE first outing that Olaf and my mother and I took together was to an outdoor concert near Providence, Rhode Island. The idea was certainly Olaf's, for when my mother listened to records it was to Broadway musicals or occasionally to a softened French version of rock and roll (which silenced me because it was beyond sarcasm), but one day she turned to me at the dinner table and asked if I wanted to go with her

that weekend to hear some music. "And with Olaf, too," she added. "He wants to come along. It would be the three of us."

My father got up from the table and went to the stove, where he lit the flame under his French coffee pot.

"What music?" he asked.

"Roberto Flack," she said.

"You mean Roberta," I whispered.

"That's what I said, isn't it?"

"Killing Me Softly," I said.

She looked at me blankly.

"The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face."

"What is that?" she asked.

"Those are her songs, Mom."

My father turned from the stove to watch us. "So you've never even heard her music?" he said.

"We would be going for Leon's benefit."

"For Leon's benefit?"

"That's right."

"What does the mailman care about Leon?"

"Jack, what kind of a thing to say is that?"

"What kind of music is it?" said my father.

"What kind?" said my mother. "Rock music. But light, I think. Not hard."

"Jazz," I answered.

I saw him nod appreciatively at the stove. He didn't know the first thing about music, but while he cooked he always listened to the same Charles Mingus tape I had once given him for his birthday. "And how much are the tickets?" he said.

"Olaf has a friend who works at the Bowl."

"I suppose they met at the University of Chicago."

"Jack, the tickets are free."

"And whose car are you taking?"

"Olaf doesn't have one."

"I see," said my father. "And I suppose he has a friend at the gas station, too."

"It's not even to Providence, Jack. It's not that long a drive."

"Seventy miles," he said. "Seventy-five, in fact. An hour and twenty minutes." He poured the coffee and downed it in a gulp. "Each way, that is. That's fifteen gallons."

"But this is an opportunity."

"Well," said my father, narrowing his eyes, "I suppose every man is entitled to his opportunities."

That Saturday morning, a few minutes after my father had left for the restaurant, Olaf appeared at our door. It was the height of summer, and he was wearing postal shorts and a T-shirt that lacked its sleeves. Inside it I could see his chest, which, like his hair, was a startling ruby color. "What did Jack say?" was the first thing he asked my mother.

"About the concert? He said it was fine. He likes jazz."

"It's not jazz," Olaf answered. "It's R. and B."

He wanted to impress us, I could see. He nodded at me and I nodded back. My mother had tied a red bandanna over her head like a French farm girl, and Olaf sat at the table while she packed our sandwiches, pretending not to watch her.

"Listen to this," he said, as he drove my father's Chrysler over the Cape Cod Canal onto the mainland. He pulled a sheet of paper from his pocket and unfolded it with one hand. "Executive privilege will not be used as a shield to prevent embarrassing information from being made available"—he snickered and shook his head—"but will be exercised only in those particular instances in which disclosure would harm the public interest." He pretended to check the passenger-side mirror. "That's what Nixon said in March," he said. "The public interest!"

"Would you please keep both hands on the wheel?" my mother said.

"They filed suit today to get the tapes," I said from the back.

"Out of sight," said Olaf.

My mother turned her head around. "How did you know that?"

"I read the papers."

"You're onto the man," said Olaf. "Aren't you, Leon?"

"I know of no law that says the President is exempt from the duties which devolve on other citizens," I answered.

"Well, good gracious—" said my mother.

"That's Sam Ervin," said Olaf. "Leon is onto the Pig on this one." He turned halfway around and extended his hand toward me. "You're onto him, aren't you?"

"Face front, please," said my mother.

At the concert, Olaf insisted on talking more about Watergate. And

when he tired of that he began quoting whole paragraphs from the President's speeches. He seemed to have been studying them. During "Killing Me Softly," while the entire crowd stood silently swaying, I heard his quiet recitation behind me. " 'While I was in Florida trying to get a few days' rest after my visit to Moscow,' " he said, " 'I first learned from news reports of the Watergate break-in.' " There was a fervor to his voice even when he was whispering. " 'I was appalled at this senseless, illegal action, and I was shocked to learn that employees of the reelection committee were apparently among those guilty.' "

Later, on the ride home, my mother hummed "Killing Me Softly"—I think she was taken by the surprising lilt of it—but all I could hear in my own head was Olaf's raspy monologue, whispered behind me as though at last, among the thousands of human beings swaying around him, he had found a comrade.

ONE morning my father stood in the doorway of my room with a magazine in his hand. "What is this?" he said. "Beats me."

"Well, I assumed *you* might know," he said, "since you're the one it's addressed to."

He handed me a tabloid on cheap newsprint, addressed to Leon T. Mercier. It was called *Rising Sun*.

"What's the 'T' stand for?" he said.

"Beats me again."

He looked at me darkly. I opened to the middle and read a headline: "YPSILANTI ASSEMBLERS: THROW OFF YOUR CHAINS!"

"I get *Restaurant Business* and the *Globe*," he said. "If you want something to read, you can borrow one of those two, Leon Jack Mercier." Then he left the room. From the top of the stairs I heard him say, "And you can tell your mother you don't need her magazines anymore."

ONE Saturday night after we had closed the restaurant, my father took a detour on the way home. By now it was October, but the heat had persisted that year like an ominous warning. The moon was large, a day or two before full, and in its yellow light the dunes ruffled their grasses as we passed. I knew where he was taking me; every time we

moved he discovered somewhere new, a site with a view, an enclave of panoramic serenity that led him into the reveries he harbored about success and fearlessness and the opportunities of life.

He turned the car down a cut in the dunes and brought us out onto a shallow beach where the spume cut a rumbling, pearly crescent against the sand. We got out and took off our shoes. Highamsett was a small glow beyond us, and the sea on the other side was dark except for the lights of the trawlers, which fished all night if they came upon a school. I could feel the day's heat still rising.

"You know, Leon," he said, "you're just like me. You're serious about life. Your mother isn't, but you and me—we are."

This was ridiculous. In my heart, I was a boy in a gorilla suit, waving my arms to the blasts of trumpets and bullhorns. "I know what you mean," I said.

"No matter what, we've always got that."

"Right."

"Tell me," he said, picking up a handful of sand, "what do you want to do with your life?"

I thought for a while. "I can't answer that."

"Answer."

"It would be a guess."

"Guess, then."

He was asking this question in order to make a point, I knew. I had no thoughts of the future. "I want to raise sheep on a farm."

"Sheep?"

"Sheep."

"Interesting," he said. "Where?"

"I haven't decided."

"Do you think a lot of your friends want that kind of life?"

"Yes."

"Hmm," he said.

We stood there on the warm sand. It seemed to me he was making a plan: how to market a restaurant to the new generation of sheep farmers. Then he said, "I'm not having an affair with Marguerite. You can tell your mother that, too."

AT breakfast the next morning my father's face was darkened by thought. On weekends Chez Jacques served brunch, so he could never linger at the breakfast table, but before he had even started his coffee he sat back,

crossed his arms behind his head, and said to my mother, "It's too bad that Agnew capitulated."

"Just a minute," she answered. "He didn't pay his taxes."

"That's just one interpretation," said my father.

"And what might the other be?"

"If everybody paid what the government asked for, Sylvie, there would be no businesses left to tax."

I could see my mother considering this. She knew how difficult it was to run a restaurant; she had seen him through twelve of them. "But, Jack," she said at last, "they were handing him envelopes full of cash."

"*Allegedly*," said my father. "That's what *allegedly* happened. A man like that is hounded by enemies."

"Actually," I said quietly, "there are dozens of witnesses."

My father let his arms fall. He looked over at me, then folded his napkin and set it on the table. We would have to spend the afternoon together at the restaurant, and I could see restraint working in his throat. "I see," he said at last. He turned to my mother. "Well, then, Sylvie," he said, "that's some subscription you bought for your son."

"Which subscription is that?" said my mother.

"That rag that comes in the mail."

"I don't think it was Mom," I whispered.

"Which rag is that, Jack? I don't have the slightest idea what you're talking about."

"Don't give me that."

"I think the 'T' is for Trotsky," I said.

"What did you say?" said my father.

"Olaf must have given it to me. It wasn't Mom. The initial—I think the subscription was from Olaf."

"Oh, now I see," he said. "So it's not just a musical education he's bestowing upon us, it's a political one." He stood and left the room. We heard his steps pounding up the stairs, then pounding down again. When he returned he was holding the latest issue of *Rising Sun* in his hand; he brought it to the stove and rolled it up in a spindle.

"Wait," my mother said calmly.

"For what?" He ignited the burner, fanned the paper in the air, and then brought it down within a few inches of the flame.

"You're going to be late for work, Jack."

"Let them make their own breakfast."

"Jack—"

"What?"

"Don't you dare," she said. She lowered her voice. "*Si tu le brûles, c'est moi que tu brûles.*"

"Oh, no you don't," he said.

"*C'est moi que tu brûles, Jack. Tu me brûles vraiment.*"

"Is that what he means to you?"

At the time I thought he was referring to me. "Come on, you two," I said.

"I'm a librarian, Jack," said my mother. "*Vraiment—*"

He raised the rolled paper above his head and waved it. At that point he had known my mother for more than twenty years. He had fallen in love with her in the days when he felt lucky to be alive, thunderstruck that he could feel the sun on his skin, taste red wine, hold a woman as lovely as she was in his arms; and he had lived the next ten years, he once told me, buoyed simply by the sense that he had cheated the end of his own life. But then, slowly, eventually, he had come to recognize that his happiness, like any other man's, was fragile, and that in particular it had come to depend on keeping this woman in his grasp. I knew how important it was to him to seem invincible, to feel that he ruled his own house, but when he brought his arm down he stopped it just above the flame. The edge of the paper darkened and curled, but he lifted it away before it ignited and set it beside the burners.

Then Olaf appeared. I saw him out the window, striding down the lane in his Allman Brothers T-shirt. I caught my mother's eye and she stepped outside to greet him. She was gone a few moments, and when the door opened again she was behind Olaf, urging him into the room. My father did not look up from the stove.

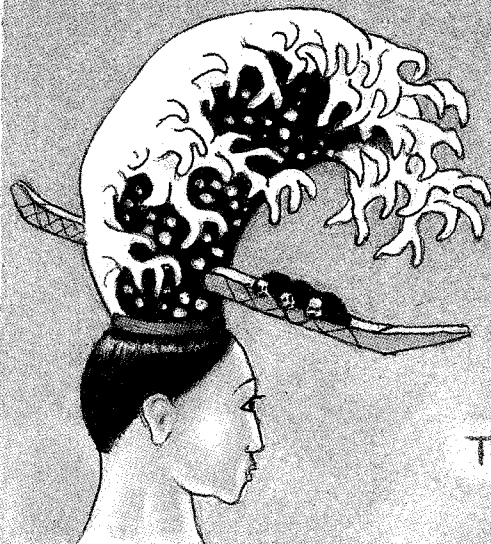
"Jack," said my mother, "this is Olaf, whom I told you about. We're going out to the beach today. It's so warm."

Olaf stepped forward and offered his hand. My father still did not look up.

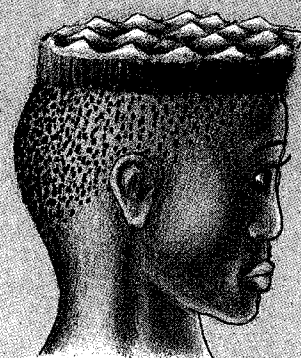
"Honestly, Jack," said my mother.

At last my father feigned surprise, smiled thinly, and offered his own hand in return. I saw Olaf's glance fall on the rolled copy of *Rising Sun*. "We

BEACH DAYS DO'S (AND DON'TS)



THE HOKUSAI



THE WHITECAP



THE PERFECT WAVE



THE CLAM SLAB



THE OIL SLICK
(WITH CONTAINMENT BOOMS)



THE RED SEA PART



THE DESERT ISLAND

BOB KNOX



"You look sharp, like a carefully aged Cheddar."

were heading to the beach," he said.

"Good, you can take Leon with you."

"Doesn't Leon work today?"

"He has the day off," my father said.

"I just gave him the day off."

"Good," said my mother. "Then he can come with us."

I watched Olaf's reaction, but it gave away nothing. He caught my eye, then offered me his hand, which I slid into my own, soul style.

"Only if you don't mind," I said.

Olaf drove again. It was nine in the morning, but the beach parking lot was already festooned with cars. The heat was still unabated, and everyone but my mother seemed giddy with the strangeness of it. On the sand we took off our shoes, then continued on, keeping our steps in the shaded lee of the low, grass-covered dunes that sep-

arated the coastal road from the shore.

"What beach is this?" I said.

Olaf grinned at me. "Right," he said, nodding his head.

We had reached the end of the dunes and come out onto the waterfront, a narrow, dark-sanded spit roughened by boulders. The beach curved away from us, disappearing quickly behind the thistle in both directions, as though at high tide the surf would touch the stems. Olaf looked around.

"What do you say, Leon," he said, nodding one way and then the other, "up or down?"

Later on, I realized that he thought I knew where we were. I jerked my head in the direction his was pointing. "Up," I said.

"I knew you would," he answered.

Twenty yards farther the spit turned

away sharply, and when we came around the bend we passed a couple sitting in the dunes, naked. My mother was behind me, so I did not turn around, but I glimpsed the pale, laden spread of the girl's breasts and the dark mat of her pelvis. I tried to keep walking, as though this were what I saw every afternoon at the beach, but I wondered whether my mother had seen as well. My father had once told me about the beaches of the Riviera: nudity was commonplace in Europe, he had said. "The French are comfortable with the natural state."

Olaf was already at the next set of dunes, his mailman's stride opening a distance between us, and as I hurried to close it I understood for certain where he had brought us. To my right was the crashing sea and to my left were any number of couples among the low dunes, with their clothing in piles next to them. Inside every nook, they were lounging on their backs in the shade of the small hills of sand, their arms thrown over their eyes to block the sun, but their long, tanned bodies and dark crotches left open to us like damp, sandy sea creatures that had wriggled up onto the shore. "Oh, my," I heard my mother say behind me.

Olaf stopped ahead, and when I reached him he pointed into an empty cove of dunes. This was where we went, and he opened his pack and took out a blanket for us. We had walked far enough to be alone.

"Well," said my mother when she arrived a moment later, "I guess it *has* been a little warm lately."

We sat down. From this position I could not see where her gaze was directed but felt it fixed upon my own. When I looked over the dunes I did so only peripherally, fixing my actual glance upward, at the white, vaporish glare of the sky.

Then Olaf stood suddenly and pulled off his pants. What do you do at a moment like that? My mother dropped her head. I continued to gaze at the sky, then off to the right of us, where in the distance a couple were walking down toward the water. Olaf had no underwear on, and in a moment I had no choice but to look at him, at the inslanting jut of his sunburned legs, at his long, dangling testicles, and the white,

end-weighted hang of his penis. He was thin enough to appear to be almost starving, and the skittish bouncing of one foot and its skinny, sunburned calf made it clear to me that he was as nervous as we were.

"For God's sake," said my mother.

"What?" said Olaf.

"This is not the Côte d'Azur."

"Those are the old rules," he said.

But I saw a slight bend now in his waist, the instinct to cover himself. "Leon, do you see anything wrong with this?"

"Depends what you mean."

My mother laughed, surprising me, and the small chirp she made brought Olaf's hands down to his pants again, which were jumbled at his feet in the sand. He picked them up, then set them down. He picked them up again, this time folding them. Then he turned around and sat facing away from us, out toward the Atlantic, which was awash in undulating panels of glare. His ribs showed through his back; sand stuck to the prominent wings of his pelvis. My mother shrugged her shoulders at me and then scooped out a small cove in one of the dunes with her elbows.

"Nixon's mistake," Olaf said, "is that he thinks it matters if he fires Cox." He paused, and my mother, a generous woman, sat forward in her dune to listen. "I mean, look at him," Olaf continued. "The Attorney General wouldn't do it. The Deputy Attorney General wouldn't do it. If it hadn't been for Bork, he would have had to go all the way down the line. Who's next? I don't think anyone else would have done it."

He stretched his arms skyward, and then crossed them behind his head as though the sand and sea in front of him were the front parcel of his own well-trimmed piece of land, and it was at this moment, perhaps because I had never studied him from the back before, that I realized the obvious: he looked like my father. What was it? His height, of course, but also something more—some mechanical hitch in the link of arm and shoulder, more angular than most, the bones sharply cut, and the square jut of the head, which from the front was Lincoln-esque but which now, with his features turned toward the sea, clearly bore the subtle imprint of my father. He

turned his face up to the sky for a moment and I saw my father reaching up for one of the copper saucepans strung from the hanging racks above his range, sorting through them with the ends of his fingers until he pushed one up and out of its hook. I looked away.

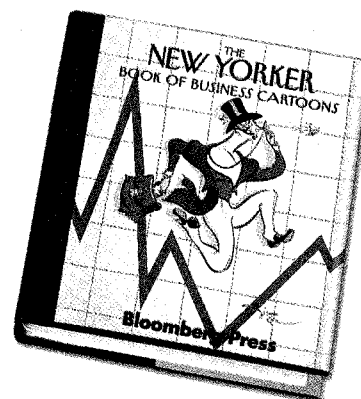
We were silent. Finally, a few minutes later, Olaf said, quietly, "A nation should not be remembered only for the petty little indecent things that seem to obsess us." Nixon had said this that summer, and even in its eloquence, I remembered, it had seemed to me to be his first admission of defeat. "Let others spend their time dealing with the murky, small, unimportant, vicious little things," Olaf said. He stood, still facing out to sea, and put on his pants again. "We will spend *our* time," he whispered, his voice nearly lost in the waves, "building a better world."

THE next Saturday, as we were preparing for brunch, a man in a dark suit knocked on the window of Chez Jacques. My father pointed at his watch and waved him away. He knocked again. My father removed a cigarette from his shirt pocket, tamped it on the mantel above the decorative fireplace, then turned from the door. When the knocking came once more he lit the cigarette, buttoned his apron, and went to answer. The man came in, showed my father a Secret Service badge, and told him that tomorrow President Nixon would be having lunch at our restaurant.

The Secret Service man asked if he could inspect the premises, and my father, flush with emotion, assented. He couldn't help his agitation, and I had to sit him down in one of the bentwood chairs while the Secret Service man peered up and down the street through the front window, then went into the kitchen, where we could see him open and close the door to the rear alley, the bathroom, and the pantry closet in which my father's three French chef's robes hung from the coatracks like long white alligators. By the time he emerged again my father was nearly weeping.

He had known for quite some time that Nixon was coming to the Cape, I realized later, but he thought the President had bypassed him for Chez Morlieu, down the road in Hyannis. After

Very funny business, indeed!



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the Secret Service man left, my father took out a handkerchief, blew his nose, and gained control of himself. Then he rose and hugged me. And I, out of a desire to please, and also out of a sudden understanding—he was, I realized, wishing my mother were sharing his joy—I, too, felt my eyes begin to fill. Then we separated and returned to our chores.

THAT afternoon we got in the car and drove west to Apponagansett to buy supplies. My father had decided to prepare poularde à la Derby, and he knew a farmer there who raised chickens by letting them run free in his fields. Poularde à la Derby was not his most spectacular dish—that would have been his magrets de canard aux poires—but it was his most reliable.

As we crossed the Acushnet River he said, "I wonder what your mother thinks of who we're making lunch for tomorrow."

"She's excited," I said. "She can barely contain herself."

He regarded me. He knew my inclinations but wanted deeply to believe what I'd said. "You know," he said, glancing in the mirror, "you're starting to look like me, too. We have

the same brow. You don't look like your mother anymore."

I looked in the side mirror, where I saw that he was wrong. "I see what you mean," I answered.

He reached his hand over and laid it on my shoulder. "What does the mailman think?" he said.

"He's excited, too," I paused. "He's as excited as Mom."

He looked at me. "You know," he said, "he was at Woodstock. Do you know anything about Woodstock?"

"Of course."

"I mean, do you know who really benefitted from Woodstock?"

I thought about this. Olaf had mentioned being there, but not in depth. He had talked about building a new society. "I think we all benefitted."

My father pulled a toothpick from his shirt pocket and inserted it between his lips. "Warner Brothers records benefitted," he said. "Ask the mailman if he knows that."

The farmer's wife was a narrow-headed woman so taciturn she gave the impression of brain damage, and as we waited at the stock fence for her to cross the yard I could tell she was put out by us. "Ordering's Monday," she said, when my father told

her what we wanted. "You know that."

"This is a special situation."

"Birds are too small."

"Come now," said my father. "You know who this is for, don't you?"

"I know you got yourself a little Italian place out the Cape."

I could see my father stiffen. "Leon?" he said.

"These birds are for the President," I said dryly.

"Did you hear that?" my father said. "The President has a reservation tomorrow at Chez Jacques."

"What's that mean?"

"The President of the United States," said my father.

"Hens go Monday."

At last my father took out his wallet, and when he offered to pay her double the price she relented. But on the way home he was pensive. The chickens were in the trunk, in plastic bags. He said, "The President's really lost his popularity, hasn't he?"

"With some people."

"What do you think of Watergate?" he asked.

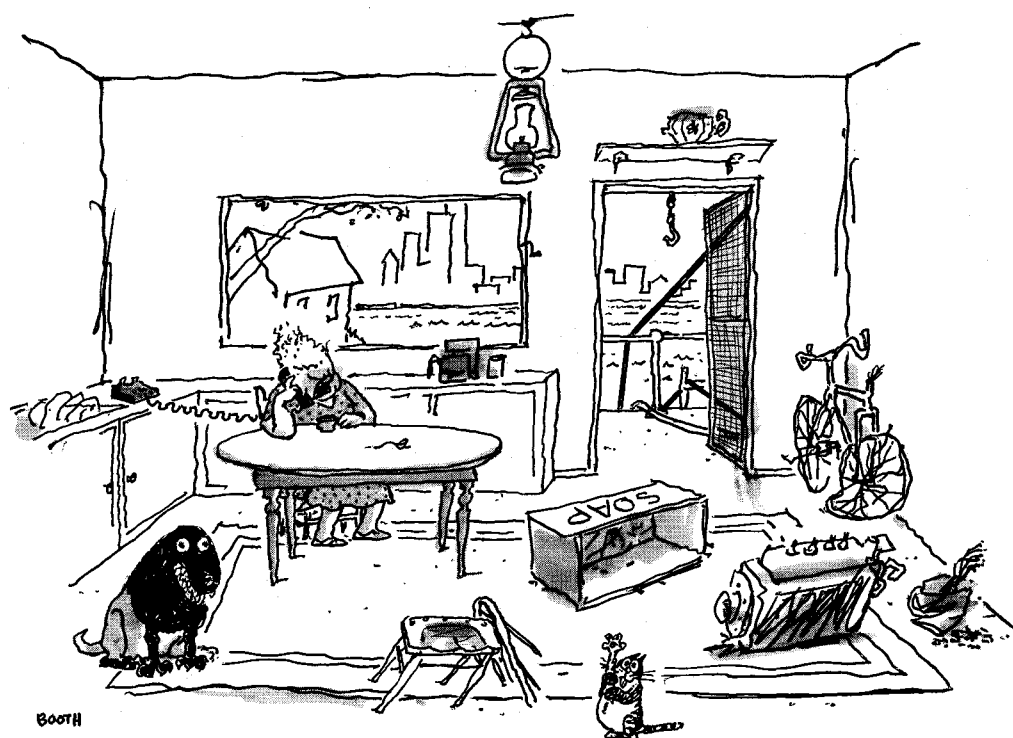
I glanced into the side mirror. "Maybe they're making too much of it," I said.

"That's right," he said. "You have to keep in mind what the President is doing."

"What's that?"

"He's running a business," said my father.

THROUGH the door of the kitchen, I watched the President eat his meal. He was sitting with Ron Ziegler, his press secretary, whom I recognized from the *Globe*. Claude served flawlessly, fanning down the dishes like a matador flourishing his cape, and Marguerite hovered in the background, positioning herself so that the President could see her legs. The President drank from a private bottle—it was whiskey, I believe—and although I was shocked that he would drink whiskey at lunch I also realized that he had to give a speech in the after-



"He thinks he's located a World War I torpedo boat.
What's exciting at your house?"

noon. The two Secret Service men at the next table both drank mineral water, each from a separate bottle, and only Mr. Ziegler drank the wine. My father stood behind me, at the burners. "What are they doing now?"

"The President is on the haricots," I said.

"Well?"

"He likes them."

My father narrowed his eyes and turned to the stove. I stayed at the window. What I saw was the President sifting through the string beans on his plate. He was picking them up one at a time with his fork and looking underneath them, then setting them down at the rim of his dish. He didn't eat any. With the potatoes he did the same thing. He formed a ring of side dishes around his entrée. Finally, he cut a tiny piece of the poularde and put it into his mouth. I watched him carefully: he didn't look displeased, but he didn't look pleased, either. I went back to my post at the sink.

Suddenly Claude cried "*Porte*," and before I could peek through the glass again the swinging door flew open and the President burst into the kitchen. He was followed by the two Secret Service men, who were surprisingly large (from the back, I realized later, they looked like him—that was the point), yet all three of them moved swiftly through the narrow corridor of sinks to my father's side of the grill. The President, his hand extended, was smiling broadly. He wanted my father to like him—that was his look; and my father gave him the same look in return. They shook hands. "*Très bien*," said the President, smiling at his own accent.

My father turned his mouth down and nodded, in the falsely self-deprecating way of the French. He adjusted his hat.

The President said, "*A merveilleux meal*."

"*Un honneur*," said my father.

And then they were out the back door. The back door! That was all my father was allowed to say. War, love, ambition: this was his moment, and now it had passed. I looked through the glass into the dining room just as Mr. Ziegler disappeared into a set of limousines out front. In the kitchen it was the silence after a bomb.

Then Claude said "*Porte*" and disap-

peared. I followed him and, not knowing what else to do, began busing the tables. I gathered the plates of the President and the press secretary and brought them back to my sink, then went back for the plates of the Secret Service men.

When I returned to the kitchen, my father said, "Whose lunch is that?"

I should have lied, but I was flustered. "It's the President's," I said. As the words came out I recognized the edge of vindictiveness in them, a tiny snake suddenly appearing. It startled me: I loved my father, but I also resented him—for his ambition, I think, more than anything else, which I had begun to notice in myself. Then I added, "He must not have been hungry."

He looked at the plate. On his face I watched disappointment warring with pride.

"He has a speech to make," I said. "Clean it off."

When he left the kitchen, I stood for a few moments letting the Hobart build up steam. Through the wall I heard him bumping about the dining room like a bear in a camp. I scraped Mr. Ziegler's and the Secret Service men's dishes, quickly ate the rest of the President's poularde, and slid the plates into the machine. Ambition is a lonely mountain, I was thinking.

MY father drove us down a half hour before Nixon was scheduled to appear. He parked the Chrysler several blocks from the parade grounds and we walked the rest of the way, my father carrying a camera slung over his shoulder. My mother and I struggled to keep up with his eager strides. A crowd had gathered, and off to one side, separated by barricades, a group of demonstrators were huddled, standing sullenly in the sun.

Finally, we heard sirens and then a set of black limousines drove up, flanked front and back by every highway patrolman in the county. The doors opened and dozens of Secret Service men climbed out. They fanned out around the cars and began scanning the crowd, one hand on the center buttons of their coats and the other up around their ears. We pressed closer. All around me, fathers were swinging their children up onto their shoulders and mothers were going up on tiptoe; across the lot the clump of



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demonstrators knotted closer together and began chanting. Several Secret Service men moved in their direction, and a trio of highway-patrol motorcycles swung around and idled in front of them.

It was then that I saw Olaf. He was at the edge of the crowd, making his way along a line of yellow police barricades, not toward the demonstrators and not toward the podium but toward the spot from which it seemed that the President was about to emerge—toward the last of the idling limousines whose black doors had not yet opened. I recognized the vertical lurch of his stride, even in the constrained jumble of onlookers that hid, then showed, then hid his red-bearded head a good half a foot above the crowd. He crossed a small clearing between two barricades and I saw that he was wearing an overcoat and carrying a shopping bag under his arm. Dread filled my chest. The weather had cooled, but it was not cool enough for an overcoat.

At that moment Nixon stepped out of his limousine and a cheer spread from the back of the parade grounds up to the front, where the mayor of Highamsett stood applauding on the bandstand. My father held his hands over his head to clap. I tugged on my mother's arm and pointed to Olaf.

"My God," said my mother, and she took a step toward him. In the thickness of the crowd this was all she could do. Twenty yards away from us, the Secret Service men closed around the President at the door of the limousine so that he disappeared; Olaf reached into the bag, stepped over the yellow barricade into the open sunlight, and thrust my gorilla mask over his head. Then he pulled off the overcoat. A roar went up from the crowd of demonstrators. The fur, charged by the heavy static of the coat, sprung away from the suit and made him immense—absolutely colossal, a lumbering, dark-limbed Gargantua who lurched away from the crowd toward the limousines, zigzagged through several of the staggered barricades, and in the last moments of his glory began to high-step and bellow and bat the great fur-covered arms together in front of him before the Secret Service was upon him and took him to the ground.

The limousines moved off a few yards, then stopped. The Secret Service

men had pinned Olaf and in a moment they stood him up and pulled off the headpiece; his face looked like an apple within the huge circumference of the neck, red and pitifully small against the bristling hair of the suit. They had pulled his arms behind him, pinning the huge, black limbs in cuffs, hustling him along so that the flopping, large-toed footpieces dragged behind. In a moment he was gone.

The crowd was suddenly quiet. The demonstrators, as much as the supporters of the President, seemed to have been humbled by the swiftness of the men who had collared Olaf; the cruiser he had been thrust into sped off without its sirens. Those were tenuous times for the President; his determination must have been at its dark peak, and in just a few moments, when the alarmed quiet of the crowd began to break and murmurs spread among us, he reemerged from his limousine. Again a cheer went up; later, I learned that he paid certain members of such crowds. He climbed the stairs to the podium and took a seat behind the Plexiglas, where the mayor of Highamsett now stood, smiling broadly at the microphone. From the bench Nixon bent to tie his shoe, a strange, awkward gesture I will always remember, because it seemed even to me, a rash teen-ager caught up in the excitement more than in the truth of the event, that this was the gesture of a guilty man. The President was awkward, I suddenly saw, stiff in his bearing, not unlike Olaf; and in a way that surprised me at the moment—and that would later save me, I think, when I myself almost went over an edge—my heart went out to him.

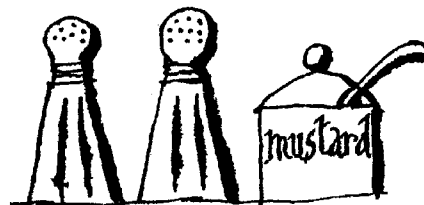
THAT was the winter when things started to go fast in my life. I began saying angry things and this drew people to me, the boys of Cape West High School who until then had been as impenetrable to me as a forest. We smoked weed together; we dropped acid; we drove pickup trucks too fast on

the icy roads of the Cape. I don't think I was trying to be like Olaf, although he had something to do with what I found myself becoming. It's a curious thing to say: I think I was trying to make my mother happy.

My father, on the other hand, I was trying to avoid. Much later, when he spent a year in federal prison for tax evasion, I couldn't go to visit him. Seriousness—as he had said it would—had crept up on me, had taken over my life, really, and I had done things that had put me on the other side of the law.

One day that winter, I ate a blotter of Purple Haze that had been laced, I think, with chloroamphetamine. I came home quietly in the early afternoon, when the effect of the acid was still on the upswing. I arrived dreaming colors. The house was a museum of hushed sounds and a thousand shades of white. There was noise coming from my parents' bedroom. I went in. Two figures were on the bed.

I stood inside the door, driven there by a power I am no closer to understanding now than I was then. It was early: my father would still be at the restaurant. I expected it to be Olaf in that bed. I *wanted* it to be Olaf, which was something of a shock to me but an amusing one. Standing on my parents' dark shag rug, I had a good, leisurely look at the forces in my own life—my mother, this bed, this man—and I remember marvelling at the clarity of it all. My reactions were slow. My mother rose from the sheets, naked, looking like a French mother in the movies; then she wrapped herself in her robe and came to me while my father—no, it wasn't Olaf after all, it was my father. My father—home early because he knew by then that this restaurant was going to fail—my father sat up on the mattress and began to swear. It was my mother, though, who finally understood that something had happened, although she couldn't have known in a thousand years what was going on inside my brain. I heard her tell my father to call the doctor. Then she came to me and wrapped me in the afghan from the foot of their bed. Humming a lullaby, she sat me down on the chair, and finally, while behind her my father rose and moved to the telephone, she took me in her arms and held me, like a baby. ♦



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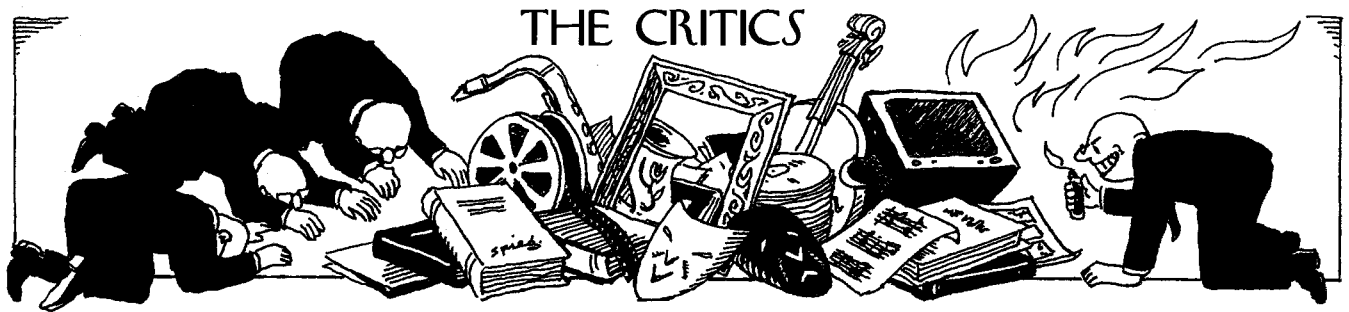
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ON TELEVISION

THE PICTURE OF GRIEF

A week marked by memorable restraint and excess.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

LATE in the day on Sunday, July 18th, it fell to Rear Admiral Richard Larrabee, of the United States Coast Guard, to inform the country, and the world, that the effort to find the three people on board a plane piloted by John F. Kennedy, Jr., which had been missing for two days, had changed from a search-and-rescue mission to a search-and-recovery mission. By then, Americans who had been watching the news since the previous morning—when it was first reported that the plane carrying Kennedy, his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and Carolyn's sister Lauren Bessette had failed to arrive the night before at Martha's Vineyard Airport—knew that the chances that any of the passengers would be found alive were small. By then, we had seen closeup pictures on TV of the luggage tag on the garment bag belonging to Lauren Bessette which had washed up on the western shores of the Vineyard; we had been told that a prescription bottle with her sister's name on it had been found as well. Larrabee's statement avoided direct mention of death, and in fact it was his grave delicacy that made clear exactly what he was telling us.

Until Larrabee's announcement, none of the news broadcasts, which had covered little else since Saturday morning, could legitimately have allowed themselves to show Kennedy's dates of birth and death on the screen, and even afterward it seemed that they

allowed a decent interval of a few hours to pass before doing so. At some point on Sunday night, the covers of the next day's news magazines were displayed. *Time* had marched on: its cover had a portrait of Kennedy as an adult and an inset picture of the three-year-old John saluting his father's casket in 1963, and it carried the shocking words "John Fitzgerald Kennedy Jr. 1960-1999." The truth was now inescapable; but that didn't make it any less unbelievable.

As early as Saturday afternoon, the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin acknowledged in a television interview that this event had a "sickeningly familiar" ring to it. To some people, this feeling extended to how it would be covered on television: more certain than Kennedy's death at that point was the knowledge that in the weeks to come there would be relentless media attention focussed on the accident and on the legacy—the portion of the legacy that exists in news archives—of triumph and tragedy in the Kennedy family. This dread was in fact borne out, and at the same time it was possible to feel that anything less than excessive attention would have been inappropriate—or, at any rate, impossible. In the days after Kennedy was first declared missing, many Americans—"ordinary" Americans, they are always called—went on camera to say that they felt connected to him, that they felt they knew him, that he was part of their lives. And, judging from

all the footage of interviews with him that has been shown since the accident, he understood and accepted that—understood, that is, that these feelings were understandable, if not actually reflective of reality. John Kennedy was not a creation of TV or of the press (though his supposed nickname, John-John, was), but TV gave us images of him at every stage of his life, and these are what made many people feel that they had a relationship with him that was, as Jeff Greenfield put it, "realer than real." It's pointless to complain that we live in a world where images are king, since there is no reason to believe that there was ever a time in human history when that was not so, and it is no wonder that the image of the little boy raising his hand in salute at his father's funeral has become part of American iconography.

Still, as understandable, on an emotional level—and, it has to be said, on a business level—as the television coverage in the last week has been, there have been many moments of grotesqueness which cannot be excused by the difficulty of the subject being covered. And it *was* a difficult subject: Until Wednesday afternoon, nearly five days after the story broke, no bodies had been recovered, and so, in a sense, there was no "news" to report. Reporters were frozen in their places, reduced to covering the daily comings and goings of Kennedy family members. There was a certain amount of wrestling with the uncomfortable notion that finding the cause of the accident might involve questioning Kennedy's judgment in taking off that night. (There was almost some actual, W.W.F. wrestling over this: William Safire, on Sunday morning's "Meet the Press," declared Kennedy guilty of bad judgment, and



More certain than Kennedy's death at that point was the knowledge that we would see the tragic family images relentlessly replayed.

Mike Barnicle, the former longtime Boston *Globe* columnist and a neighbor of the Kennedys' in Hyannis Port, objected strenuously to Safire's judgment of Kennedy. Their paired comments, of course, were replayed several times that day on a couple of networks.) Then, too, there was the painful, awkward necessity, if that's the right word—and news organizations surely would argue that it is—of reporting on the family that had been dragged into the spotlight by the plane crash. Blessedly, reporters did not succeed in invading the privacy of Carolyn and Lauren Bessette's parents; police prevented them from getting anywhere near their mother's house, and cameras were stuck with only a long shot of a quiet street in suburban Connecticut.

For much of last week, the cable news channels devoted most of their programming to the Kennedy story. It was not a pretty picture, though certainly the bona-fide news shows, both on cable and on the networks, handled the story better than such parasitic enterprises as "Extra" and "Access Hollywood." Ever since the Gulf War, networks, following CNN's lead, have rushed to package tragedies and disasters as quickly as possible. By Sunday, every channel except Animal Planet, it seemed, had its own J.F.K., Jr., theme music and graphics and story title. ("Forever Young," on CNN, was one of the more wince-worthy titles rolled out over the first weekend.) All those hours that need filling have made news broadcasts very self-conscious. Even more than they had done when Princess Diana died, commentators and news-show hosts asked each other on the air whether they were overdoing their coverage. Most of them thought about it for a second and decided they were not. During the week, there was a millennial flowering of fatuousness, as a dozen or so commentators and Kennedy acquaintances cropped up again and again. I was struck by how many media people seemed to be acquainted with John Kennedy, either through school connections (Kennedy went to Brown, but he evidently was a figure of central importance to the Harvard male media mafia, whose don is Walter Isaacson, the managing editor of

Time); or through George, Kennedy's magazine; or through A-list social connections. One of these media-mafia wise guys is Jonathan Alter, a *Newsweek* writer and MSNBC commentator. Alter doesn't merely talk; he intones, he addresses the nation. Measuring his words as carefully as if he were measuring God for a new suit, he said that to describe John and his sister, Caroline, as close "doesn't do justice to the term 'close,'" and that there is "an almost perfect congruence, if you will, between this family and the history of this country." Tom Brokaw, speaking over footage of the U.S.S. *Briscoe* as it prepared to move out to sea with the ashes of the three young people, felt it necessary to inform viewers that he had meant to call John and tell him about a recent sea-kayaking trip he had taken but never got around to it. Monday morning, on "The View," Barbara Walters told her audience that she had been seated next to Carolyn Bessette Kennedy once at a dinner, and that Carolyn had spoken to her of her feelings about the press. Walters said that she had reassured Carolyn: "You don't have to worry. I won't talk about this." Then, pleased with herself for having scaled such heights of discretion, she told us, "And I have not—until just now." Walters, a professor at the Hans Christian Andersen School of Journalism, also said that Carolyn had had a "fairy-tale life" and that she had "caught Prince Charming."

If any of the news last week could be called welcome, it was the reports from people outside the usual news circles, particularly the numerous small-plane pilots and aviation experts who were called on to explain what might have happened to Kennedy's Piper Saratoga. (It appeared, interestingly, that a sizable number of reporters were themselves pilots, and one of them, Bob Arnot, of NBC, went so far as to go aloft last Tuesday and demonstrate the now infamous "graveyard spiral" in a stunt plane built to withstand such stresses.) These stories, much more than stories about how John Kennedy was the "heir to Camelot" and "America's Prince," or discussions about whether he had plans to run for office, told viewers what they wanted to know—helped

them in their genuine need to make some sense of the terrible accident.

What remains notable about last week's coverage is how often all the news organizations, which were so quick to pay homage to Kennedy's dignity and graciousness (qualities he was often seen displaying while being involuntarily surrounded by TV cameras), saw fit to violate the very principles they were celebrating. At Hyannis Port, they set up their cameras so as to be in constant view of the Kennedy house and its inhabitants. One reporter, who was tracking the family's movements on the beach nearby, said, in a tone usually reserved for describing the activities of criminal suspects, "Some of the younger members were seen to be skipping stones." Mike Barnicle had the gall to say that everyone should "just take a break and leave this family alone for a little while," as he was plopped in a chair in front of the house. Cameras with long lenses peered through the foliage around Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's house on Long Island during her first face-to-face contact with Ted Kennedy since the accident occurred. Upon seeing them, Schlossberg, the co-author of a book with the wishful title "The Right to Privacy," turned her back. But the cameras didn't get the message, and kept running.

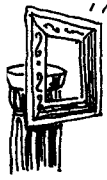
The outstanding standard-bearers for decency last week were the many organizations that worked together to find and recover and lay to rest the bodies of John Kennedy, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and Lauren Bessette. And, by requiring boats and helicopters to remain well outside their area of operations, they created a large zone of reportorial decency. In press briefings all week, officials maintained a level of exquisite sensitivity. During the briefing on Wednesday, in which Rear Admiral Larrabee announced that all three bodies had been found, a reporter asked him how the bodies had been brought to the surface. Larrabee said that the task was accomplished "in a way that respected the situation they were in." MSNBC's Brian Williams, commenting dryly on Larrabee's style, remarked, "I don't know the polite word for 'evasive,' but Admiral Larrabee has seemed to sometimes talk in broad strokes." Exactly. ♦

THE ART WORLD

MINIMALISM DEPOT

MASS MoCA makes a theme park out of edginess.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



SOMEDAY you are going to visit MASS MoCA, the immense museum of contemporary art that recently opened in a group of converted old factories in North Adams, Massachusetts. Until then, you might be tempted to fib, letting on that you've been there already. This is one of those subjects that you want to nod knowledgeable about when it comes up—perhaps with the optional flourish of an eloquently ambivalent head-shake. Tucked into the upper left-hand corner of the state, where it confirms nearby Williamstown as the honorary capital of the culturally glutted, bed-and-breakfast Berkshires, MASS MoCA joins the A list of American tourist destinations, along with Civil War battlefields, Disney World, and various exceedingly impressive rock formations. It is the damndest place—a grandiose proposition about art's institutional future which exalts and irritates in equal measure. It's a great philosophical site, and it's fun. Go, by all means.

MASS MoCA (boy, do I hate that gunky name!) began in the mid-nineteen-eighties as a gleam in the eye of a young Williams College art historian named Thomas Krens. Krens, who has been the director of the Guggenheim Museum since 1988, has become the art world's de-facto minister of globalization, providing far-flung governments and corporate interests with the instant glory of their own Guggenheim auxiliaries. For a while, Krens's long-stymied scheme for MASS MoCA remained a priority on his immodest agenda. Then, in the early nineties, his focus shifted to what has so far been the crown jewel of his reign: the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, in a superlative, revolutionary building designed by Frank Gehry. MASS MoCA would have died unborn but for a heroic consortium of local forces led by Joseph C. Thompson—a former student of Krens's and a true man of the nineties, with advanced degrees in both art and business. A bouncing baby behemoth now, the new

museum still occupies only six of the factory complex's twenty-seven buildings. Those six happen to provide something like a quarter of a million square feet for art and other uses, including theatres and rehearsal spaces dedicated to ambitious performance programs.

"Please keep an open mind," a young male docent pleaded while addressing a tour group of regular-looking folks on the recent summer Sunday of my visit. He was about to conduct his charges into a series of vast, air-conditioned, daylight-flooded spaces filled with large, strange stuff. I didn't envy him. For one thing, the initial show—it consists of loans from the Guggenheim, Dia, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art—is miscellaneous in character and quality, as if art were an afterthought for this art Mecca. This need not be the rule for future installations, of course, and it may even be just as well, for now. The preposterous scale of the place is bound to short-circuit contem-

plation of mere art on anybody's first go-round. Moreover, the show's unevenness will hardly bolster an anxious docent's morale. The faces of some tour-group members seethed with smirky merriment: a combination of churchy piety and cascading weirdness will do that to people.

WHEN the tall, cordiality-challenged Tom Krens first hit our town, I—like a lot of New York art worldlings—thought he was nuts in his apparent drive to bring to the masses nineteen-seventies-type avant-gardism, which is, roughly, art that functions by making viewers self-conscious. Rooted in the passive aggression of Minimalism, the aesthetics of such work—which all but banned conventional painting and sculpture—seemed to mark a permanent divide between hipsters and squares. We should have known better. Universal trends in the design of public spaces—airports, malls, corporate plazas, "edge cities," "entertainment architecture"—had made lumpen hipsters of practically everybody. To conceive of the museum as a peculiarly sensitized zone in our world's enveloping spectacle was but a short, logical step.

MASS MoCA takes that step. It embodies ideas of art that are in a continuum with common experience, festively inten-



*Rauschenberg's "The ¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece" at MASS MoCA:
A confession of mindless compulsiveness.*

sifying the everyday. What anyone wants to make of it is, or should be, O.K. I was standing inside a work by Bruce Nauman, a triangular room that demonstrates why triangular rooms are rare. (Anywhere in it you feel cornered.) Suddenly, a gentleman poked his head in the door. "Is this an art work?" he asked. I said that it was. He made a face that communicated, "Oh, hell, why not?" and withdrew.

The three most dire words I can think of to associate with MASS MoCA are South Street Seaport. It could be worse. Most people, including some who may not admit it, really enjoy the sandblasted-brick and exposed-wooden-beam sublimities of snappily malled architectural relics. Rare is the city that does not boast one or more of those resurrections now, such as the Seaport, with its shops and eateries and pet tall ships. These projects hybridize Americans' two favorite qualities: the old and the new. The Cambridge design firm Bruner/Cott & Associates, which did the job at MASS MoCA, wisely preserved many of the former mills' handsomely soiled brick walls, though an awful lot of standard wallboard, dazzlingly shiny wood flooring, and high-tech fixtures were introduced. This clash of genteel preservationism and preening gim-crackery results in a look that will say "nineteen-nineties" from now until the end of recorded time. Maybe the place will age well, in some surprising way. Meanwhile, it points to the consumer-first ethos that seems to characterize all up-to-date cultural production these days. MASS MoCA knocks itself silly in its eagerness to please—even as it showcases art from a receding era of edgier, more challenging intentions.

Here is what MASS MoCA ought to do for art's sake: assemble a rigorous, permanently displayed collection (probably by long-term loan, and certainly with top-notch scholarly advice) of greatest hits in the thirty-five-year saga of installational art since Minimalism. Uniquely equipped with an abundance of space, it could become the prime spot on the planet where one goes to learn and to grapple with that vastly consequential history. MASS MoCA's first show gestures toward the ideal. Some of the iconic names are represented—Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Joseph Beuys, Nauman—but, for the most part, they're not shown at their best. Among a few right-stuff touches are dozens of febrile little drawings by Beuys that

are far more inspiring than the artist's huge sculptural installation, "Lightning with Stag in Its Glare," whose title is the best thing about it. Also powerful is a group of three Naumans. His long "Green Light Corridor" (1970-71) is just wide enough to squeeze through sideways, under bright-green fluorescent lights. When you emerge from it, look around. For a few seconds, the world will be suffused with blooming pinkness. Manipulative? Uh-huh. As he often does, and always with fierce economy, Nauman makes us painfully acute witnesses to our own physical and perceptual makeup.

There are too many piss-elegant extravagances in glass, steel, lead, neon, and fresh vegetables, along with a motorcycle, and whatnot by the Italian Mario Merz. "Arte Povera" is the rubric for such work—a European vein of Minimalism that seldom fails to look extremely expensive. Then there is "The ¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece," a nearly thousand-foot-long work in progress by Robert Rauschenberg which fits with room to spare into a gallery that is roughly the size of a football field. I find it depressing—a confession of mindless compulsiveness. It is pleasant enough when consumed at the

pace of a healthful walk, but pausing before any of its technically frenetic, spiritually distracted components made my heart sink. Rauschenberg—a onetime genius—has seen his job description devolve into a brazen protean creativity. Even on that score, he is bested at MASS MoCA by James Rosenquist, whose rather hysterical recent mural for Deutsche Bank, "The Swimmer in the Economist," at least achieves a slam-bang unity of lipstick colors and tumbling composition. You can look at it without having to admire the artist inordinately.

I got apprehensive when I read this in a brochure: "MASS MoCA is a continuously evolving site for not only the exhibition but also the production of contemporary art and the fostering of connections between the individual arts and between arts and technology. Moreover, it brings together the public and private sectors." In other words, what we have is the makings of a multi-vehicle pileup on the art-cultural superhighway. How about, instead, making some distinctions at the end of a schizoid century that mixed everything up with everything else? Anything on the scale of MASS MoCA is apt to be entertaining, even taste and intelligence. ♦

BOOKS

MUD AND FLAMES

A new biography of Byron leaves us little to like except the poems.

BY JOHN UPDIKE



BENITA EISLER'S impressive, if a bit overwrought, biography "Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame" (Knopf; \$35) begins with a description of the burning of the poet's memoirs, a month after his death, in the London offices of his publisher, John Murray. Of the six men present, one was Murray, in this case an anti-publisher consigning a source of mighty profits to the flames; another was his sixteen-year-old son, invited in to witness this epochal event; two represented the separate interests of Byron's estranged wife, Annabella, and his half sister, Augusta Leigh; another, John Cam Hobhouse, was Byron's

old friend and a faithful fellow-traveller but also a Whig M.P. and a considerable prig. Only the sixth, the Dublin-born poet Thomas Moore, wanted to save the memoirs; they had been given to him by Byron, and he, with Byron's approval, had sold the copyright to Murray. He nearly came to blows with Hobhouse, but the memoirs, bound in two volumes, were fed piecemeal to the fireplace. One wonders if their rescue and eventual publication would have significantly enlarged our already copious knowledge of the profligate poet's crowded thirty-six years and reduced the torrent of biographical writings that began when his fever-ridden corpse had scarcely cooled.

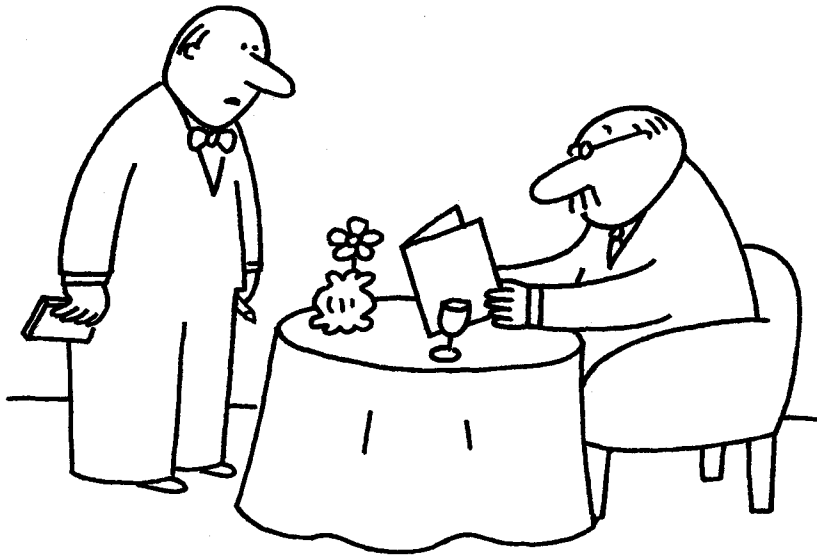


Hung over, ailing, in debt, besieged by scandal and women, Byron nonetheless found time to write.

Eisler's eight-hundred-page tome follows by two years "Byron: The Flawed Angel," by Phyllis Grosskurth, which in turn bobs in the wide wake of Leslie A. Marchand's three-volume biography (1957) and his thirteen-volume edition of "Byron's Letters and Journals" (1973-94). Byron's fame and charisma were such that almost all his correspondents saved every letter they received, and Byron freely confided his most intimate feelings and experiences. The details of his sex life—a remarkably varied one, including homosexuality at school and after, much whoring and tugging of servant girls, an orgiastic interlude in Venice, incest with his half sister, and nu-

merous seductions and liaisons within his own social class—have gradually emerged, and the graphic details and four-letter words in his letters to friends can now be printed. So his memoirs (from which he had, he wrote, "omitted all the really consequential and important parts") might have added little to the picture created by surviving documents and the autobiographical elements of his generally self-dramatizing poetry; nevertheless, their deliberate destruction, especially by his close friends Hobhouse and Murray, affronts us with its high-handed, irreversible violence. Its paradoxical effect was to enhance by one more flamboyant stroke the diabolical Byron legend.

Eisler, whose book previous to this seven years' labor was a study of the relation between Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz, gives us a Byron who, up to his second and final departure from England, in 1816, was a monster of vanity and appetite, with one possibly redeeming quality: he could write. The Byrons were a wild noble line. The first lord, John Byron of Colewyke, bought from Henry VIII a newly dissolved monastery, Newstead Abbey, in Nottinghamshire, and converted it to baronial use as a picturesque ruin, incorporating the southern wall of the church nave as a wall of his own residence. He passed his holdings down to a son begotten on a neighbor's



"Oh, sorry, those are the Ten Commandments. Hang on, I'll get you a menu."

wife, having legitimized his heir by marrying the lady. The heir, called Little Sir John of the Great Beard, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth. The poet's granduncle, the fifth lord, was known as the Wicked Lord; under his tenure the property became "the scene of licentious *fêtes champêtres*." In 1765, in the course of a dispute at a tavern in Pall Mall, this Byron ran his opponent through with a sword and killed him. Later, "from a brooding sense of guilt and grievance," Eisler suggests, he descended into periodic madness: "Dark tales were told in Nottinghamshire" of how he "shot his coachman dead over a trifle" and "when displeased, he would throw Lady Byron into the pond."

His nephew, the poet's father, was a chip off the old unstable block. "Heartless and swaggeringly handsome," John Byron, called Mad Jack, was a devoted seducer and gambler who as a twenty-two-year-old Guardsman made a fine catch of another man's wife: the Marchioness of Carmarthen, born Amelia d'Arcy, Baroness Conyers, and Countess of Mertola, ran off with Mad Jack at first sight, causing her husband, later the Duke of Leeds, to lock her out of their house. She brought with her, however, an annual income of four thousand pounds. She married her lover, lived with him in Paris and Chantilly, bore him three children (of whom only Augusta, the youngest, survived infancy), and died mysteriously, at the age of twenty-nine.

That left Jack shy of four thousand quid a year; his search for the next heiress took him to the favorite resort of fortune hunters, Bath, and landed him the thirteenth Laird of Gight, Catherine Gordon—the last of her family, sketchily educated, hot-tempered, and even at the age of twenty distinctly overweight. But she owned a castle, lands, and thousands in Aberdeen bank shares. A curiosity of their union is that, by her parents' wills, a female inheriting the Gight estates had to marry a Gordon or her husband had to take the Gordon name; Jack became John Byron Gordon.

The bride's assets were no match for the bridegroom's debts. He was clapped into prison as soon as he surfaced in London, and upon his release "kept moving to stay ahead of the bailiffs." He was still on the lam when his son, baptized George Gordon, was born, in London, on January 22, 1788, after a long and difficult labor, with "a caul and a malformed right foot." This foot—the most famous extremity in English literature, not excepting Shakespeare's "dyer's hand"—Byron tended to blame his mother for, citing her "excess of delicacy" in the period before delivery, meaning either her tight corsets or an undue modesty during obstetrical examinations. Catherine, in turn, a doting and self-sacrificing but sharp-tongued parent, was not above taunting her son about it, confounding it with the moral malformation inherited from his scapegrace father. Byron related how, before he

departed for his first European trip, in 1809, his mother had, "in one of her fits of passion, uttered an imprecation upon me, praying that I might prove as ill-formed in mind as I am in body." His foot, which pained him when young and humiliated him as an adolescent, was, in Eisler's reading, the key to his reckless, ruthless, self-liberated personality:

Byron's deformity would cause him emotional injury beyond any other psychic wound he would ever sustain. Turned inward, his rage became depression, but also something more insidious: the sense that he had a special dispensation from the moral sanctions imposed upon others and a lifelong entitlement to the forbidden.

LITERAL entitlement fell to him at the age of nine, when his granduncle the Wicked Lord died, making the boy, who had been living with his mother in shabby rooms above shops in Aberdeen, the sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale. His father had died seven years before, in France, of tuberculosis and alcoholism, at the age of thirty-six—the same age, oddly, at which both the poet and his only legitimate child, Ada, were to die. Though there were some lands and properties in the inheritance, the estate was so cash-poor that the Wicked Lord's body had to wait nearly a month while credit was arranged to cover the costs; Catherine sold her Aberdeen furniture to meet the bills, and not enough was left for coach fare to Newstead Abbey. Finally, at summer's end, mother and son went south for good. Byron became an Englishman; he spoke always with a trace of Scots burr, which he vehemently denied, such an accent being as much an embarrassment to him as his clubfoot and his obese, coarse mother. He also brought from the country of his childhood a love of wild and mountainous landscapes, his mother's republican sympathies, and a dose of Calvinist Puritanism that colors his works with gloom and damnation—he referred to himself as *le diable boiteux*, the lame devil. By the age of eleven, he was suffering painful quack treatments of his right foot by a Dr. Lavender, and sexual abuse at the hands of his nursemaid, May Gray, a hard-drinking young Scotswoman who taught him Scripture as well as masturbating him. He confided to his journal:

My passions were developed very early—so early—that few would believe me—if I were to state the period—and the facts which ac-

accompanied it—Perhaps this was one of the reasons which caused the anticipated melancholy of my thoughts—having anticipated life.

The young Byron's principal acquisition in becoming a peer of the realm was the obligation to live like a lord, which brought with it a habit of mortgaging the future to maintain a baronial present. Both he and his mother, Phyllis Grosskurth states in a happy phrase, "were victims of institutionalized extravagance." Catherine lived frugally so that young Lord Byron could go to Harrow and "enjoy a generous allowance, which included outfitting him at his father's fashionable tailor," Eisler writes. At Cambridge, he wore the gold-embroidered gown a noble was entitled to, furnished his rooms elaborately, ordered bottles of wine by the dozen, and kept a carriage and three horses, with liveried footmen. On departing the university, he refurbished Newstead Abbey expensively and entertained there scandalously, dressing his male guests as monks and providing "Paphian girls" for their delectation. Leaving behind an ailing mother and more than fourteen thousand pounds in debt, he embarked with his Cambridge friend Hobhouse for Lisbon and points east—travels that would become the basis of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." When, in 1816, he left England a second time, self-exiled to escape the scandals loosed by his separation from his wife of one year, he equipped himself with a splendid coach that was a replica of Napoleon's.

More than once in his life, military grandeur beckoned: in 1813, contemplating a Greek journey, he bought uniforms, swords, "shoes and inexpressibles without number," five bedsteads, five saddles, camp kettles, rifles, pistols, powder flasks, six portable three-foot telescopes, and, for himself, on this expedition that never took place, a set of new luggage and "a portable writing desk of heavy wood, with a secret drawer." When, in 1823, he actually did equip a military expedition to help free Greece from the Turks, he designed picturesque uniforms for himself and his personal staff, including "helmets worthy of Homeric heroes, with plumes waving above the Byron crest and motto, 'Crede Byron,' the whole secured by a wide chin strap that clearly meant business." His second-in-command, Edward Trelawny, was another romantic adventurer but "found the uniforms and helmets so ridiculous he refused even to try

his on. . . . The helmets went back into their pink boxes."

Byron's financial extravagances were matched by his erotic investments. In the period leading up to his marriage to Annabella Milbanke, early in 1815, he was (1) in love with and sleeping with and at times living with his half sister, Augusta Leigh; (2) attempting to disentangle himself from his romance with the love-crazed Caroline Lamb; (3) using in this attempt the sexagenarian Lady Melbourne as a confidante to whom he entrusted the erotic details of his life and the letters from his smitten correspondents; (4) paying ardent though not quite consummated court to Lady Frances Webster, the wife of an old Harrow chum; (5) enjoying an affair with the coolly promiscuous, forty-year-old militant Whig Lady Oxford, in the course of which he sexually molested her eleven-year-old daughter, Lady Charlotte Harley, to whom, under the name of Ianthe, he dedicated the seventh printing of "Childe Harold," with attendant high-flown verses.

As the carriage pulled away from his wedding to Annabella, "Byron began singing and ranting," reviling her family, bemoaning her meagre dowry, and pitying her "that she had not married a better man." Samuel Rogers, one of the readers of Byron's destroyed memoirs, remembered the poet's recording that on his wedding night he awoke and, surrounded by crimson bed curtains, cried out, "Good God, I am surely in hell!" He proceeded to make his bride's life hellish, harping on the insanity in his family, retreating into black moods, dragging her on a visit to Augusta in which he ordered "both of them to take turns embracing him," and threatening to commit suicide with pistols he always kept loaded. Though the marriage had its tranquil interludes, and Annabella proved, as the proficient rake had suspected, "an eager acolyte and passionate lover," the trend was sharply downward; by the end of the year, Byron, faced with the impending seizure of his possessions by bailiffs and deranged by nights of brandy drinking, was threatening his now pregnant wife with the pistols, and taunting her with his affair with a Drury Lane actress.

Annabella, early in her dreadful year of wedlock, had turned to Byron's sister

as the person she knew to be closest to him, ignoring evidence of their incest. For the last weeks of Lady Byron's lying-in, Augusta came to London and stayed at the Byrons' rented mansion, at 13 Piccadilly Terrace. There, while Byron drank and raved and smashed furniture and fired pistols, she maintained what fragile order the household had. When she pointed out to her brother that he was destroying them all, he said, "I am determined to fling Misery around me & upon all those with whom I am concerned." Viewing his infant daughter—Ada, the future pioneer of computer science—for the first time, he reportedly exclaimed, "Oh! What an implement of torture I have acquired in you." Servants had to restrain him from raping his newly delivered wife. He took to reading the Marquis de Sade. Fearful for his sanity, Annabella wrote to Dr. Baillie, who had treated Byron's foot when he was at Harrow, "Undoubtedly I am more than anyone the subject of his irritation, because he deems himself (as he has said) a villain for marrying me. . . . adding that the more I love him, & the better I am, the more accursed he is."

Early in 1816, less than a month after their daughter was born, an unsigned note from Byron ordered Annabella from his house. She fled in the dead of winter with Ada to the Leicestershire home of her parents; they, as the story of her year gradually emerged, reacted with horror and proposed that the couple separate. Annabella agreed and, in the face of pleading, apologetic letters from her husband ("Dearest Pip, I wish you would make it up—for I am dreadfully sick of all this. . . . If you will—I am ready to make any penitential speech or speeches you please—and will be very good & tractable for the rest of my days—and very sorry for all that have gone before"), remained implacable. The reader feels a weight roll from him: after a callously outrageous life of being indulged and excused, Byron at last encounters a definite refusal. Rather than face the disclosures of adultery, incest, pederasty, and sodomy that might have arisen from a public trial, he agreed to legal separation. Divorce in that age was prohibitively complicated and expensive, involving the Ecclesiastic Court, an Act of Parliament (never obtainable by a woman), and, if the father's custody was



BRIEFLY NOTED

LOCAL GIRLS, by Alice Hoffman (Putnam; \$22.95). Gretel Samuelson, growing up on suburban Long Island, has many reasons for being disenchanted with the world: her mother has cancer; her father and step-mother are callous, greedy people; her smart brother is a drug addict; and her best friend is a preoccupied teen-age mother. However, these interlocking stories—the best are Gretel's first-person accounts—are nuanced explorations of not only the cynicism of coming-of-age but also the hope, during a time when the steady sound of cars on a highway "could seem like the miracle I'd been looking for."

THE COLONY OF UNREQUITED DREAMS, by Wayne Johnston (Doubleday; \$24.95). This novel is rooted in the history of Newfoundland, from the birth of the future premier Joe Smallwood, in 1900, to April Fools' Day, 1949, when the craggy island becomes a province of Canada. It includes a fitful love story, a dark secret, and a politician's rise to power, but the narrative is at its strongest when it stays close to the sea and the land: the frozen disaster of the sealing ship S.S. Newfoundland, and Smallwood's epic walk along the railroad to unionize the section men. As our heroine, a world-weary journalist, writes, "It doesn't matter to the mountains that we joined Confederation, nor to the bogs, the barrens, the rivers or the rocks."

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: VOLUME TWO, 1933-1938, by Blanche Wiesen Cook (Viking; \$34.95). When Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated for his first Presidential term, his wife, then forty-eight, already had a political identity of her own. She had chaired the first Presidential women's platform committee for the Democratic Party, and had developed a network of reformers and progressives—most of them women. In this admiring biography Cook shows how Mrs. R., responding to her colleagues' requests and reports, embarked on an unprecedented role for a First Lady, and how, although legally powerless, she became a political authority and a widely beloved figure. Cook's work is too detailed to provide much narrative sweep, but the details reveal the period's crosscurrents and the complexities of her subject's personality.

MOAB IS MY WASHPOT, by Stephen Fry (Random House; \$24). In this autobiography Fry, a British actor/writer/bon vivant, recounts his first twenty years: he began boarding school at seven; he recognized his homosexuality at fourteen; at eighteen, he was briefly jailed after a lifetime of compulsive thievery, in spite of which he was admitted to Cambridge. Fry is a master of provocative tangents, and he remembers with a cheeky wit. His delicious book recalls the famous lines by Oscar Wilde (whom Fry recently played onscreen) "I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train."

challenged, Chancery Court. After much obstruction and protestation of his innocence, and after portraying himself as a martyr in the poem "Fare Thee Well," Byron signed the papers and left England. In Europe, he became the Byron cherished by posterity—the carefree great poet of "Don Juan," the friend of Shelley and the patron of that poet's heterodox circle, the husbandly lover of the Countess Teresa Guiccioli, and the would-be savior of Greece. England had been poisonous for the poor lame bookish boy from Aberdeen.

RICHARD ASHLEY RICE, introducing his 1933 selection "The Best of Byron," wonderfully says of John Drinkwater's 1925 biography, "It does not lose sight of Byron's essentially clear poetical mind in the analysis of his essentially muddy behavior." The clarity to some extent grew from the mud. When Byron's friend Douglas Kinnaid questioned the cynical frankness of "Don Juan," Byron wrote back in his most flashing, irresistible epistolary style:

As to "Don Juan"—confess—confess you dog—and be candid—that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing—it may be bawdy—but is it not good English—it may be profligate—but is it not *life*, is it not *the thing*?—Could any man have written it—who has not lived in the world? and tooled in a post-chaise? in a hackney coach? in a Gondola? against a Wall? in a court carriage? in a vis-à-vis?—on a table?—and under it?

His poetry forms a counterpoint of honest endeavor to his dissipations and aristocratic pretensions. He began writing poems in early adolescence, and was encouraged by the Pigot family, who lived across the green from his mother's rented house in Southwell, a Nottingham village not far from Newstead Abbey. At the instigation especially of Elizabeth Pigot, who was five years older than the eighteen-year-old Byron, he assembled and had privately printed his first volume, the modestly titled "Fugitive Pieces." Not content merely to have his juvenile poems see print, he revised and added to them industriously. Some early readers in Southwell were shocked by a series of verses "To Mary," a young London doxy with whom he had enjoyed the ups and downs of love. While pleading in defense, "My Lyre, the Heart;—my Muse, the simple Truth," he called in all the copies of his first book and burned them; only four survive. He hastened, however, to

salvage some of the contents and augmented these verses to create "Poems on Various Occasions," printed in January of 1807 in a private edition of a hundred copies. With more revisions and additions, this by June had become "Hours of Idleness," the first book of Byron's to be issued to the public. It was described on its title page as by "George Gordon, Lord Byron, a Minor." By now, Byron was enrolled at Cambridge, where his desultory studies barely interrupted his "continued routine of Dissipation" and his frequent trips to the pleasure spots of London. He was further preoccupied by a strenuous regimen of weight loss; five feet eight inches tall, he weighed at his plumpest more than fourteen stone, about two hundred pounds. The budding poet saw the book's pleasant initial reception spoiled by some vitriolic reviews mocking his nobility and his minority. Worst was one in the *Edinburgh Review*, by Henry Brougham, who concluded unprecisely, "We must take these poems as we find them, and be content, for they are the last we shall ever have from him." Byron was already hard at work on his extensive counterattack, the satiric "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Having coaxed a degree from Cambridge, he retired to Newstead Abbey and honed this new, sensational work as his twenty-first birthday approached. "I am a mighty scribbler," he proudly wrote Augusta.

Byron's literary fluency is phenomenal, like Goethe's or Bernard Shaw's. Hung over, ailing, on the move, frantic with debt, besieged by scandal and women, and aristocratically scornful of the rhymers' trade ("No one should be a rhymers who could do anything better," he confided to his journal), he nevertheless managed to find time, often late at night, in which to write. After the first two cantos of "Childe Harold" made him famous, in 1812, he wrote with a popular success no poet since has matched. "The Corsair," composed at the rate of nearly two hundred lines a day while Byron was staying with Augusta in Cambridgeshire, sold out its first printing of ten thousand in a single day in 1814, a record for poetry that still stands. "The Giaour" sold out seven editions in 1813 and was in its fourteenth by 1815. As he settled into Italian residence, Byron shifted from aristocratically refusing his royalties from Murray to bargaining hard: "You offer 1,500 guineas for the new canto—I won't

take it. I ask 2,500 guineas for it—which you will either give or not as you think proper.” He made light of his publisher’s demand for more best-selling verse—

My dear Mr. Murray,
You’re in a damned hurry
To set up this ultimate Canto—

but wrote rapidly to meet it. In two days, he wrote the eighty-four stanzas of the first draft of “Beppo,” the transitional work in which he first employed ottava rima, the stanza form that would give “Don Juan” its impudent music—“the rolling ottava rima,” Eisler says, “with its bullet shot of a last line.”

The Oriental tales, with their smoldering passions and rebel cries, which galvanized his contemporary public, and the lyrics, which were given so many musical settings in the nineteenth century, have somewhat faded, but “Don Juan” shines undimmed, an oddly contemporary masterpiece, shamelessly personal and rambling yet kept in proportion by an ironic humor and authentic wisdom. Byron had worked everything through, we feel, though his behavior was still muddy. The metrical cleverness of “Don Juan” alone is captivating. The rigorous ottava rima becomes a garment of breezy looseness as Byron slips and trips through triple rhymes, often trickily feminine, to arrive at the frequently risible couplet, of which the best remembered is:

But—Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck’d
you all?

No other romantic poet took Pope and Dryden as models; the disorderly life found refuge in dispassionate comedy and verbal agility. In words and in water, Byron shed his limp. Lady Byron, whom Grosskurth in her biography accuses of literary ambition for herself and of a vindictive envy of her husband’s success, nevertheless, after reading Canto III of “Childe Harold,” generously wrote a friend, “He is the absolute monarch of words. . . . It is not my duty to give way to hopeless and wholly unrequited affection; but so long as I live, my chief struggle will probably be not to remember him too kindly.”

Annabella was one of the “ladies intellectual.” Her fondness for mathematics led Byron to dub her “my Princess of Parallelograms,” and in time led her to give Ada an education that fitted her to become a knowing handmaiden of Charles Babbage and his premature Ana-

lytical Engine. Annabella was an intelligent observer of her difficult husband. Eight months pregnant and being psychologically tortured in his grandest, maddest style, she noted in her journals “the instinctive goodness of his heart” and said that his imagination was “too exalted—and when he cannot do good on the vast scale which it presents, he does not descend to perceive the lesser opportunities of common existence.” To him, as he begged her to return, she wrote, “It is unhappily your disposition to consider what you *have* as worthless—what you have *lost* as invaluable. But remember that you declared yourself *most miserable* when I was yours.” Benita Eisler, with such acute and not unloving analyses as part of the rich record she is examining, might have spared us a few such shrink-wrapped dictums as “Yoked to a deep emotional hunger, his urgent sexuality required an exclusive object.” She leaves us little to like about Byron except his written works, exposing his ingratitude, mendacity, manipulateness, arrogant improvidence, sentimental conceit, apparent pedophilia, sexual predations upon the less well born of many climes (Shelley when he visited Byron in Venice was shocked that “he allows fathers & mothers to bargain with him for their daughters”), and casual cruelties directed at women, ranging from his devoted mother to his helpless natural daughter Allegra, whom he consigned when she was only four to an insalubrious convent wherein she died without a single visit from him.

Through these eight hundred big pages Eisler writes with brio, of Byron’s poetry as well as of the complications of his life, but she developed, during her long literary journey, a curious tic of waving goodbye: “He would never see his ‘unrepentant Magdalen’ [Lady Oxford] again, nor would he ever again risk loving so dazzling and demanding a woman”; “In the ten days between their departure and Augusta’s arrival in London he was ‘kinder’ to her, Annabella recalled, than he had ever been—or ever would be again”; “Byron would never see his wife or

their child again”; “Byron would never see England, his wife, daughter, or sister again”; “But events now conspired to ensure that . . . he never set foot there again”; “But he did not mention a dark foreboding; he would never see his friend [Hobhouse] again.”

Nor is poetry likely to see another Lord Byron. The explosive kind of fame he enjoyed stems from repression and its relief in a mass medium—e.g., the fifties sexual puritanism that Elvis Presley and James Dean undermined with their surly looks, and the stifling Soviet atmosphere in which poets like Yevgeny Yevtushenko and Andrei Voznesensky could pack stadiums with the merest hint of political de-inhibition. Most of Byron’s short life was lived in the more than twenty years of England’s war with France. Terror of an English counterpart to the French Revolution had produced, Eisler points out, governmental curtailment of English rights: “The political reality that permitted the Regency to waltz on unafraid was that England had become a police state.” It was less the sexual content of Byron’s poems than the open political attacks on the Tories and royalty that infuriated his critics and made his publishers quake. In his journal he wrote, “I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments. . . . The fact is, riches is power, and poverty is slavery all over the earth, and one sort of establishment is no better nor worse for a *people* than another.”

Anti-establishment radicalism and anarchy, many of us may still recall from the sixties, are sexy. It is essential, for the sexual subtext, that the spokespersons be young. Byron in his twenties, through the persona of Childe Harold and the erotically charged exoticism of the Eastern tales, insinuated a dark subversiveness that made thousands of female readers want to sleep with him, to experience liberty in their loins. Narrative verse, exemplified by Milton and popularized by Sir Walter Scott, was still a mass medium. Though Wordsworth and Rousseau had turned their selves into their main subjects, Byron in his newsworthy scandals as well as in his poetry projected a *personality*, a personality Napoleonic in its insatiability and capacity for heroic defeat. “Don Juan,” now considered his masterpiece, is less mythic—indeed, it is anti-mythic, a good-humored Italianate shrug—and had to wait for its modernist renown to rise from the ashes of the Byronic furor. ♦



DARKNESS RISIBLE

Jan De Bont revisits "The Haunting"; Disney reconstitutes "Inspector Gadget."

BY ANTHONY LANE



SOME moviegoers, well versed in the art of spooky stuff, may feel that "The Haunting" is oddly familiar, and they would be right. Jan De Bont's new film is an updated version of Robert Wise's "The Haunting," which came out in 1963; both are based upon "The Haunting of Hill House," a novel by Shirley Jackson. Finally, all the above are firmly based upon zilch, apart from a vague conviction that the human psyche will be disturbed by the sight of net curtains blowing in the wind.

Such disturbances are, in the opinion of the film's leading man, a proper subject of scientific inquiry. You can tell he is interested in fear because his name is Dr. Marrow. If he were interested in botany, he would have been called Professor Pansy. "What is fear, anyway?" he asks, and by way of an answer arranges for a pair of complete fruitcakes to stay at Hill House, a monstrous pile in the Berkshires. The No. 1 nut is Eleanor (Lili Taylor), who has just spent eleven years looking after her ailing—and now departed—mother and is thus ripe for mental meltdown. Then comes Theo (Catherine Zeta-Jones), who wears suède boots from Prada and has trouble sleeping, possibly because her gold-embroidered tank top is too tight. For the sake of balance, we have the disappointingly sane Luke (Owen Wilson), who looks doomed from the start: to be a cheery skeptic is about the worst card you can be dealt in a horror flick, like being very fat in a Mack Sennett comedy. The guests are greeted by the housekeeper, who explains carefully that she lives miles away, in town: "No one

can come any nearer than that. In the night." Long pause. Deep breath. "In the dark," she adds, for the benefit of anyone who doesn't know what "night" means. Dr. Marrow (Liam Neeson), pausing only to insure that the mad-eyed caretaker has padlocked the creeper-covered gates, gets his project under way. "Isolation is essential in the cre-

problem is not so much the endless array of carved cherubs or the spear-sharp columns that hang like stalactites above Eleanor's bed as the embarrassing fact that De Bont can't get enough of them. He was formerly a cinematographer, on such canonical works as "Basic Instinct" and "Lethal Weapon 3," and even now he can't bring himself to pull the camera away, as if it were still peering up Sharon Stone's dress instead of a shady buttress. The movie's visual fussing is in inverse proportion to its plot, which is heavy with stasis. You might as well shake a corpse to try and wake it up.

Back in 1963, "The Haunting" was pretty scary, and Robert Wise was able



Night vision: Catherine Zeta-Jones gets spooked in "The Haunting."

ation of an experimental model," we are told. This is movie shorthand for "I'm afraid that no more actors are expected on the set, and consequently we are just going to have to pluck this turkey on our own."

I had high hopes for "The Haunting." After all, Jan De Bont made "Speed," which I still watch about as regularly as I take the bus, and "Twister," which compensated for its meagre characters with an in-depth look at how cows fly. The new movie begins with a ravishing shot of Hill House at dusk, with a gray frost in the air and a red sun dropping behind the trees. From this point on, unfortunately, the set designers take over, and we spend long portions of the film being given a guided tour of Victorian Gothic. As architectural styles go, this one was perilously close to kitsch in the first place, so the idea of a Hollywood rehash is doubly indigestible; the

to use the picture as training for his most formidable exercise in terror, the Mother Superior in "The Sound of Music." But his Eleanor and Theo (Julie Harris and an illicitly beautiful Claire Bloom) served him well, perhaps more delicately than the movie deserved; they frightened us by osmosis, by being so infectiously frightened themselves, and Wise was happy to let a mist of erotic suggestion float through the walls. Claire Bloom, fully armored in Mary Quant, was definitely coming on to Julie Harris. "You haven't a ghost of a chance," she said with a smile, as if challenging the virginal Eleanor to haunt her down. When Catherine Zeta-Jones arrived at Hill House and declared that she had a boyfriend *and* a girlfriend, I perked up and started to take notes, but the movie—even more bashful than Lili Taylor, with a clenched puritanism that sixties viewers would

have scorned—then drops the subject and never mentions it again. But if horror doesn't feel the breath of sex on the back of its neck, what the hell is the point of it? When things go in the night, why does it have to be bump?

The strangest aspect of De Bont's "The Haunting" is that anyone gave him the money to go ahead with it. Ever since "Poltergeist" beckoned its ghosts out of the TV set in a sunlit suburb, chunky old houses are no longer the repository of our fretfulness; they are, in fact, the ideal location for our helipads, and even Harlaxton Manor, in Lincolnshire, which provides the exteriors for Hill House, is now the British campus of the University of Evansville, Indiana. DreamWorks shouldn't be making "The Haunting" there; it should be making "Clueless II: That Is So Europe." If the Wise version was to some extent the butt end of a belief, the last gasp of Victorian spirit-summoning, imagine how dated the new film feels. We get all the trimmings: a spiral staircase, guttering candles, the ping of a harpsichord, frost on the windowpanes, bookcases that swing open, and—most terrifying of all—*doors that open and close*. It's enough to make you order a Scooby snack. The audience around me yelped once, when a skeleton sat up, but that was it; the rest of the time, everyone laughed. We laughed at the oil portrait of the angry old fart who roars his displeasure through Hill House; we laughed when the dome in Eleanor's bedroom began flexing in and out; perhaps because it reminded us of Strobe Talbott; we laughed when poor Liam Neeson, who must have thought that life could only grow sweeter after "The Phantom Menace," was forced to speak the line "What am I doing?"; above all, we laughed at the apocalyptic finale, when Lili Taylor shouted "It's about *family*!" as if she had suddenly decided to drop the horror and start campaigning for Elizabeth Dole.

Yet, to be fair, there were times during "The Haunting" when I did find myself behaving like a true horror buff—times when I simply couldn't watch, when there seemed to be no escape, when all I wanted was to run from the theatre with a stricken face and cry "The script! The script!" to a

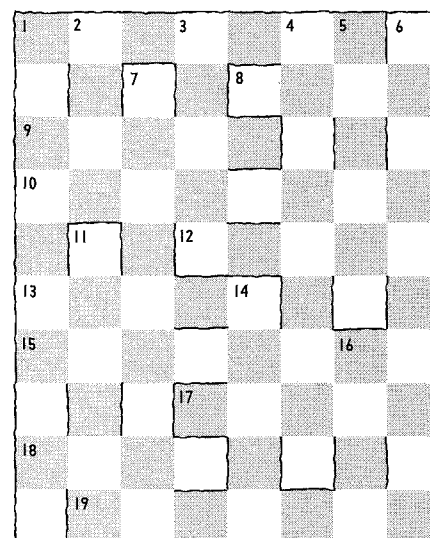
disbelieving world. But I didn't. I just sat there. In the night. In the dark. In pain.

THERE is one huge fright in "Inspector Gadget," and it's more unnerving than anything in "The Haunting." The new Disney comedy is bright, plastic, and largely inoffensive, but even to hardened moviegoers the unrelenting coercion of its product placement will come as a severe blow to the heart. If you happen to be called Yahoo!, Skittles, Volkswagen, or Homer Simpson, you will find cause for profound empathy with this major motion picture. In the final credits, there's a plug for Disneyland, which made me wonder whether you could sue an entire company for onanism.

The conceit of "Inspector Gadget" springs from the cartoon TV series of the same name, although the plot seems closer to an emasculated "Robocop." A mild security guard, John Brown (Matthew Broderick), is blown up during a robbery and reconstituted with gizmos—"Columbo and Nintendo rolled into one," as the local police chief puts it. From here on, John's tasks are fourfold: he must use his new skills to keep the peace; wreak revenge on his assailant, Claw (Rupert Everett); win the heart of his pneumatic inventor, Brenda (Joely Fisher); and, most crucial of all, try to push the movie over the ninety-minute mark. Only the last of these goals is beyond him: a one-joke movie can stretch just so far, although that never stopped Jerry Lewis. Broderick, who by some freak of biotechnology seems to have been frozen at the age of twenty-one, plays it calmly enough—unlike Rupert Everett, who mugs his way through the picture with the gay abandon of a man who has spotted a rare species of paycheck in the distance. For once, the emotional mush of Disney is held at bay, thanks to the ticker-tape spewing of sight gags; the spectacle of Gadget's fingertips flipping open to reveal a lighter, a balloon, a screwdriver, and a pair of scissors was curiously pleasing, although I think that the director, David Kellogg, missed a trick at the end. We see John and Brenda smooching on his front porch, but what happens later, when they go upstairs? Forget the fingers: if a guy can make a helicopter come out of his hat, what does he do in bed? ♦

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 98 BY MONIKA ZOOK



ACROSS

- 1 Armani's cracked basins (7)
- 8 Article that in Italy is long (4)
- 9 Practice dragging part of a dress (5)
- 10 Model can't pose for Acme (8)
- 12 Some wearers of fur are in high school (5)
- 13 Country boy's back in exotic sari (8)
- 15 Taking a fall, with rear of skirt shredding (8)
- 17 Spanish ring being worn with something silver (5)
- 18 Footwear stuff (4)
- 19 In finish, Erte changed and came in (7)

DOWN

- 1 Compare, and stay with a very thin sort of figure (10)
- 2 Light quality of a topless Ashley (4)
- 3 Flower on front of hood from Dublin (5)
- 4 A \$100 fabric, one on a pleated item (9)
- 5 The woman's clothing in shows with radiance (6)
- 6 Green-sided shifts fashioned anew (10)
- 7 Study about a fashion hub's outfit (9)
- 11 Try Mel's new bloomer? (6)
- 14 Seedy item covered in cheap pleats (5)
- 16 See jacket when reversed (4)

The solution to puzzle No. 97 appears on page 29. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

THE N.R.A.'s WRITTEN TEST FOR A GUN LICENSE



- ① My favorite kind of gun is a _____, because _____.
 - ② When I carry a gun, I feel _____, and the bigger the gun the more _____ I feel.
 - ③ My favorite part of shooting is when _____.
 - ④ If a robber tried to rob me, I'd shoot him in the _____.
 - ⑤ In my fantasies, the three people I'd most like to blow away are _____, _____, and _____.
 - ⑥ Guns are like rolls of Scotch tape. There should be at least _____ in every room of the house.
 - ⑦ I'm all for gun safety, but _____.
 - ⑧ People who don't like guns are _____ and ought to be _____.
- _____. (Use reverse side if necessary.)

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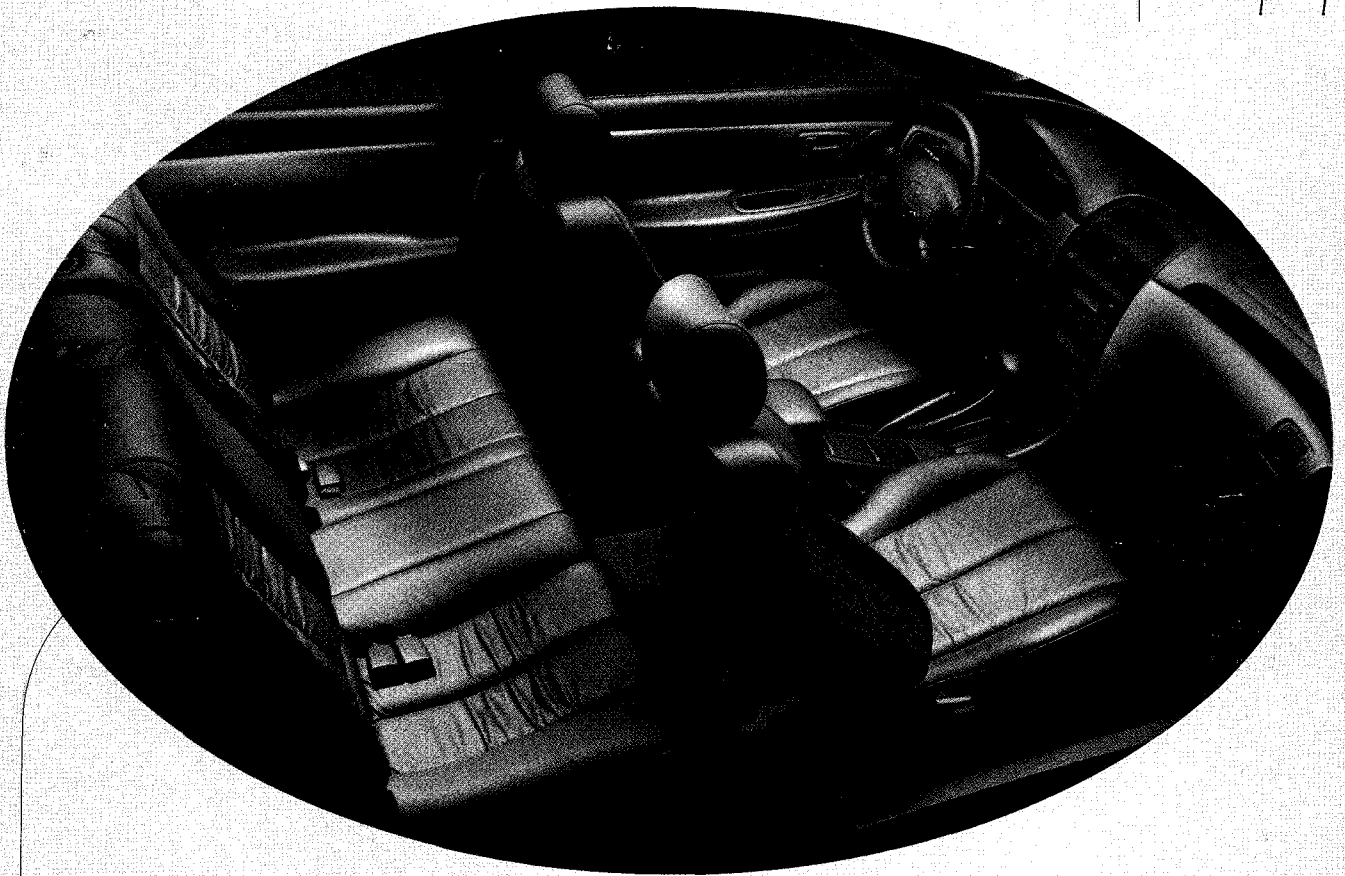
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